Grand·Prix

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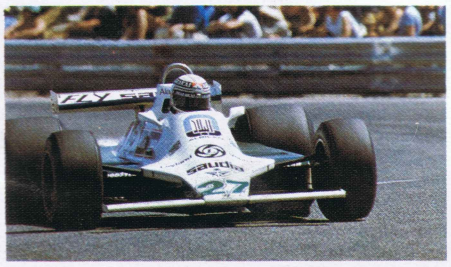
Page 12 : Patrick Depailler is completely on-form. He explains why he hasn't won... or at least, not yet.



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Grand·Prix international

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REVENGE... OR FRUSTRATION ?

Frank Williams stood rigidly to attention. « God Save the Queen » echoed among the Ricard pits, the traditional greeting for the English winning team. Guy Ligier was already paying his own stirring hommage to the man who had completely obliterated any hopes of a French victory on home ground.

The man who did it was Alan Jones. The Australian had driven superbly during the French Grand Prix, mixing his own determination with tremendous tactics. He was quick and dashing, yet careful and sensible. At the same time, he beat both on-form Ligier drivers ; there was no doubt about it.

Guy Ligier wasn't wrong when praising Alan shortly after the end of the race. « He's quick, down-to-earth. He's a great driver, certainly in the mould of a World Champion ».

Does Ligier mean that he sees a World Champion elect ? Is Alan's name already written on the trophy ? Nothing is certain. But the Williams driver has just received a worthy reward for having been deprived of his Spanish win, a win on the track, yet one that was annulled in the political in - fighting. One wonders if Jones felt that his win in France was revenge or simply frustation. Because he should have been well and truly installed as a more confortable leader of the World Championship today.

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IN THE COCKPIT

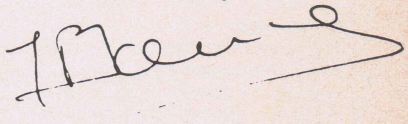
Candy

WHAT ABOUT US?

Recent events which have disrupted the World of Formula One, in Spain and since then, have made me think. Like everybody else, I've been thinking about the future of Formula One, wich is the stronger of the two tussling bodies, FISA or FOCA and when it's all going to stop. But what I've been trying to work out is what our role is as drivers and our importance in this affair.

After all, we were at the centre of the original problem because it was we who didn't pay the fines. We were the culprits concerning the rules because we didn't got to the briefings. But everyone knows that we were really manipulated because it wasn't us who wanted to miss the briefings. We didn't have any choice in the matter. Motor racing, like golf or tennis, is an individual's sport in some ways. But the main difference to those other sports is that we're tied by contract to powerful and well-organised teams. We're not really free to do what we want, firstly because we're bound by contract, but also because we can't afford to upset our teams. Formula One is very competitive these days, but we all have to fit together and work together : team managers, drivers, engineers and mechanics, if we're going to get results. We can't afford to upset one another because if the atmosphere is bad and we can't work together then we might as well stop there and then. So we have to act within team orders and conform. Our main job is to do what's best for the team. So when we were told not to go to the briefings, there was no reason for us to change sides and go anyway.

The unfortunate thing was that it was nothing more than a pretext. No briefing : fine. No fine : licence. No licence : no race.
Yes, the race will take place, said FOCA. That was the start of the war.
But we, the drivers, were blamed for not making our views felt. We were blamed for not taking a position as the GPDA. We were even blamed for not having forced a decision one way or the other by chosing which side we were going to be on.
But that's not our role. Even if the GPDA had met to discuss the subject, any decision and discussion would have immediately been useless because the constructors would have exercised pressure on their drivers.
Furthermore, I've already said in a previous issue that our main concern in the GPDA is to do with the safety of circuits and cars, not politics.
So the drivers as a body did nothing in these political wranglings. That in itself is irony because they should really have been consulted.
After all, the discussions centred on modifications laid down by FISA and rejected by FOCA. One of the most important points was that safety was going to be improved. It might almost be said that the battle centred around driver safety. How kind of you, gentlemen of FISA and FOCA. Such sudden sympathy for our little problems.
Ah, but no, not at all. The battle between FISA and FOCA was about power. FISA wanted to prove that they controlled the sport. FOCA intended to show that they governed Formula One and could control the rules. The former acted by imposing new rules and the latter reacted by rejecting them.
But even though the new regulations for Formula One revolve around safety, we have never been contacted by either FOCA or FISA since the start of the crisis. We've been completely ignored in this power struggle which pretends to be about safety.
However, a number of points in the new regulations were officially backed by the GPDA at the beginning of the year. Yet at the final moment of truth, we're forgotten. Not only have we been made the dupes of this farce by being manipulated but worse still, we've been ignored because we haven't even been asked our opinions.
And that's my worry. I find this kind of attitude quite strange, not only on FISA's part but also on FOCA's. Both parties are supposedly arguing about a World Championship for Drivers. Or may be they've forgotten that fact. Perhaps they've decided, again without telling us, to have a new World Championship between Associations, and they're just going have fun between themselves.



The paddock in Paul Ricard

NEWS OF CLAY REGAZZONI

The paraplegic centre at Basle in Switzerland doesn't look like a place of suffering. It's more like a grand hotel, a place to recover for those suffering from spinal injuries. There are no forbidding nurses guarding the door from visitors. The staff prove to be friendly and the atmosphere is warm.

For the moment, it's Clay Regazzoni's home. He has a room on the second floor. For the last two months his life has revolved around these thirty square yards with a view of the lawn and garden Clay's legs have been paralysed since his dramatic accident at Long Beach. Although he has some feeling in the skin, his legs are immobile. Doctor Guido Zach is the man in charge of Regazzoni. He treats him like a member of his own family, bolstering his morale as well as caring for his physique. We asked him whether Clay's condition was temporary or permanent.

« *I've seen many similar cases during my life* », said Dr Zach. « *The compression of the vertebral column is a common accident. But it's not easy to cure. Sometimes the patient never walks again. But then there are others, who, in time do leave their wheelchairs and walk again. One has to wait months to find out just how bad the injury is. Sometimes one has to wait as long as a year before making a definitive diagnosis.* »

Even though Clay's confined to his wheelchair, it's done nothing to dampen his sense of humour. It may be that deep down he's hiding his anxiety and fear. But to the casual visitor, Clay is the same as always : open, talkative, ready to make his own comments on the burning matters of Formula One. It's the Formula One that has been both happy and unhappy for Clay, but the same sport that has benefitted from his own presence until so recently.

« *In spite of everything* », he told us grinning, « *I'm still on four wheels. These wheelchairs have a lot of understeer, but Mo Nunn phoned me the other day and he says he's designing skirts for it.* »

Regazzoni's day is a busy one. He wakes up every morning at 5.30 am. Therapy begins at 9 am. and breaks for lunch at midday. Therapy restarts at 2 pm and Clay finally gets some time to himself from 4 pm to 7 pm.

« *A lot of people have come to see me* », he says. « *My door is always open although it annoys me sometimes that people who I don't know come to stare through curiosity. Among the racing crowd, David Thieme and François Mazet have remained very close. They often pop in and keep me up to date with what's going on in racing. I've also seen Mo Nunn, Stewart, Lauda, Watson and Fittipaldi.* »

« *Enzo Ferrari phones me from time to time... we talk about women mostly !* »

Despite his bad luck, Clay looks on the sunny side. « *The Long Beach accident could have been worse, it might have been fatal. It's a miracle that I'm still alive. Dr Zach has made it quite clear that I could be like this for the rest of my life. But it hasn't lessened my morale. I feel indifferent, and that in itself has surprised me. I'm sure it's because I've always been well-balanced. I feel really good here, almost protected. Maybe it will be different when I get home.* »

Clay wont't be allowed to leave until the end of September. « *I still don't know whether I'll go to Monaco or Lugano. I don't like planning ahead. But I'm determined that I should be independent and drive my car, even if I am confined to a wheelchair. I shall look after myself and my businesses.* »

Races, circuits, Grands Prix : will we see Clay back in the pits with his old friends ? « *I'm might come to a few races, but I don't want to be involved in Grand Prix racing professionally. I liked Grand Prix racing as it used to be, when we were all friends. We had a lot of fun. It's all changed now. Young drivers in their early 20s who should be full of life and enthusiasm have their heads turned by the money. They're like robots walking around like team managers or film stars, only interested in earning more money. I sometimes wonder if they really like motor racing, or if they simply want to be famous and successful.* »

Has he any regrets concerning his own motor racing career ? That of not having won the World Championship when he was so close in 1974, and to a lesser extent in 1979. But no others. « *I always raced because I enjoyed racing. Sometimes I enjoyed racing for ninth or tenth place. I didn't win a lot of races, but enough all the same, enough to give me satisfaction. I don't wish for more.* »

Grands Prix have lost a certain amount of charm without Regazzoni on the track. The Swiss driver with the playboy moustache, about whom so many amusing stories could be told, brought a certain amount of fun and class to the sport where drivers'personalities are being killed off by professionalism. That's why everyone is looking forward to seeing Clay back in racing, if not on the grid, as a VIP at a circuit.

« *When I woke up after my operation in Long Beach* », said Clay, « *Doctor Watkins told me that in a year's time, I would be back to normal. Only a few months have passed. But wait for me, I'll be back.* »

Pino ALLIEVI

EMERSON THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Canon and Goodyear organised an amusing competition which was open to all Formula One drivers. The aim was to simply take the best photograph. Emerson Fittipaldi was the winner with the picture we've reproduced here. However, he showed his face when he went to collect his prize. We've heard of faceless drivers, but in this case we find it ridiculous.

LIGIERS ARE RELIABLE

Ligier put themselves back on top of the Castolin-Eutectic reliability trophy table after winning the French Grand Prix round of the championship. Pironi's third place and Laffite's fourth gave them a win in front of Williams (first and sixth). Ligier lead overall with 50 points to Williams's 44.

THE END OF THE BATTLE ?

The French Grand Prix was very nearly an extraordinary race. The Monday before the race, it looked as though there would be a four team battle between Ferrari, Renault, Alfa Romeo and Osella, with a few Formula Two and Aurora cars thrown in for good measure.

The French Grand Prix was saved from this fate when FISA suggested to FOCA that they have a conciliatory meeting on June 30 when they would examine the Contructors's list of demands.

Without entering into too much detail, we'll outline some of the more important points. They want the current skirt, six wheel and four wheel drive rules to remain until 1985. They want to raise the minimum weight limit by 10 kilos. They want eight seats on the Formula One Commission, three for the Big Three Constructors and five for FOCA. In order to reduce corner speeds the Constructors have suggested that tyres be treaded in the future.

In passing, let it be said that while Goodyear may be favourable to the latter rule change, Michelin...are not.

The Constructors presented their case to a number of FISA members the day after the French Grand Prix. Jean-Marie Balestre, president of FISA, said at the end of the meeting that « *it was possible to agree on all points* », and that « *all decisions taken were done so in order to improve the climate of the World ChampionShip in the future.* »

Following this meeting, the technical commission is due to meet and then the executive committe, the second to ratify the decisions of the first.

The relative calm on Monday morning gave the impression that the battle was over. But one will still wonder, after it's all over, who was right, FOCA or FISA. But until there's proof to the contrary, nothing will appear resolved.

OSELLA THINKS TURBO

As more and more turbos engines are announced, many of the smaller teams are currently wondering what they can do to survive. Enzo Osella's comments at Le Castellet give one some idea of his thoughts on the subject.

« *We've already spent a lot of our money this year on engines* », said the other Enzo. « *It's taken up the greatest part of our budget. We prepare our engines ourselves, unlike the English teams. Otherwise, we certainly wouldn't have had the best Cosworths. We're going ahead with a development programme to make a short stroke version of this engine. We've already done the same thing with the BMW Formula Two engine with excellent results. Next year, I think that'll give us a slight advantage over the other teams. Otherwise, it's not impossible that I'll try and build my own turbo engine.* »

In fact we already know that Osella are going ahead with development of a four cylinder turbo engine which could be the BMW, althought not cecessarily. The main problem is still finance. Enzo Osella told us at Le Castellet that « *I hope to settle our financial programme as earlier as possible in order to get started on a number of projects. I don't want to do the same thing as this year when everything was decided at the last moment.* » You may reach your own conclusions from that.

EXCLUSIVE :
RENAULT TEST FOR 1981...

Renault went testing at Dijon on the Wednesday after the French Grand Prix. Michel Tetu was in charge and Jean-Pierre Jabouille was driving. But the car itself was very different to those seen at Le Castellet three days earlier. The car that Jabouille was driving seemed to be based on the recently published FISA rules due to come into operation in January 1981. Although the basis was still the same, the car was very different aerodynamically. Particular points of note are the much higher side pods, the complete lack of skirts and a new rear wing. The front nose fins have also been replaced by an almost Ferrari-like wing. This could be the 1981 Renault. It seems that Gerard Larrousse believes that Jean-Marie Balestre is here to stay.

ASIDES

• Niki Lauda to return ? We've heard rumours to that effect, and the latest came from a reliable source close to BMW. The story goes that Lauda will be talking to Brabham to do some driving when their four cyclinder BMW engine arrives. « ***All the same, Niki has said that his heart isn't in competition*** », we replied. « ***But for two million Deutschmarks (£500,000) he could certainly make sure his heart was in competition...*** »

• The self-same Chapman is apparently currently wooing British Leyland in case Essex should leave him due to lack of Lotus results. But don't confuse British Leyland with Leyland , Williams's sponsor. The latter is the company's truck division.

• Elio De Angelis, the youngest man currently in Grand Prix racing who starred at the Brazilian Grand Prix, is said to have signed a two year option with Lotus, despite their current difficulties.

• Is it really silly season time already ? It's only halfway through the season yet the rumours are already flying. A big question mark hangs over the reigning World Champion Jody Schecker. The current rumour is that he's been contacted by Formula Two championship leaders Toleman. Across the Channel, they say that Pironi will move to Renault and will be replaced in the Ligier-Talbot team by Jarier. Our Italian colleagues seem to think that Prost will move to Ferrari. No doubt the rumours will get louder and stranger as time goes on...

GOODYEAR TYRES SIZES CHOSEN FOR RACE

15'' × 9,5''
Higher and narrower

Jones
Reutemann
Andretti
De Angelis
Mass
Jarier
Patrese
Daly

13'' × 10,5''
Normal height but wider

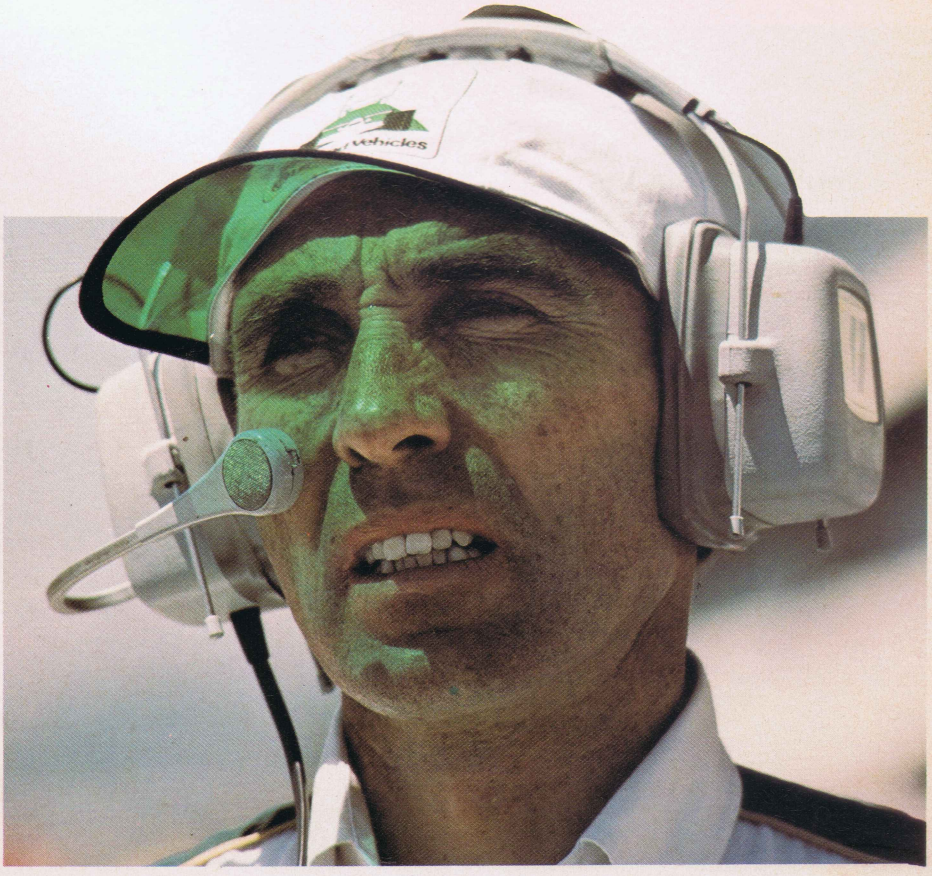
Laffite
Pironi
Prost
Piquet
Giacomelli
Depailler
Surer
Watson
Cheever
Zunino
Rosberg
Fittipaldi

Leyland
saudia
AKAI
Akai's OkayOK

JONES: THE BEST OF WINS

There's no need to win a race by a lap to be hailed the winner. Alan Jones was only 4"5 in front of Didier Pironi at the end of the French Grand Prix. Nevertheless, it was certainly his best win to date and a very significant victory, based not only on dash but on intelligence. From the first day of practice to the last lap of the race, Alan Jones looked like a potential World Champion at the French Grand Prix. If he wins the championship, he'll certainly deserve it.

by Giorgio PIOLA



Frank Williams : « I'm worried that the French are going to take their revenge in England. »

Alan Jones and Patrick Head, potential winners World Championship currently. Head's car and Jones's driving won them the French Grand Prix.

The Williams team were happy but typically reserved at the end of the French Grand Prix. While Jones was celebrating on the rostrum, the team were quietly enjoying their moment of glory. There were no tears, no emotional thumps on the chest, no hugging one another. There were a few warm English handshakes, no more. But the delighted faces of the mechanics told the story better. The Williams team as a whole were split between satisfaction and pride. They had reason to be.

Carlos Reutemann was there too. He'd just finished sixth, unable to pass René Arnoux, but he contributed to the general bonhomie, repeating over and over « *It was impossible to overtake, absolutely impossible. Amazing isn't it ?* »

« *What a tremendous race* », exclaimed Frank, almost surprised that things had also turned out so well for him.

« *That was our best win to date* », said a smiling Patrick Head, « *because we beat our main competitors who are just as strong as we are* ». He chuckled

quietly and added, « *I should think Carlos knows what the back end of a Renault turbo looks like by now* ».

The French Grand Prix went perfectly for Alan Jones and Frank Williams. Their organisation and reliability were faultless. Driver and constructor have already won a number of races together, but their Ricard win was better than the others because they showed that were real contenders for the World Championship, and that they have the mental approach to win the series. Their win was 80 per cent due to an intelligent tactical and technical approach both during practice and the race. It meant that they could determine winning solutions.

After the final qualifying session on Saturday afternoon, Alan Jones said : « *This morning, during the unofficial session, I tried the car with full tanks but it didn't really feel right. I wasn't very happy with it. But this afternoon we've finally got the right set-up. Tomorrow morning I'm going to try it with full tanks and work out the best choice for the race* ».

At the end of the Sunday morning warm-up, Jone's quickest time was a whole second faster than the first of the Ligiers, Pironi's. That in itself was a semi-victory because the previous afternoon Alan admitted that he could do little about the French cars. « *You just have to compare our cars with the Ligiers in the Signes corner to understand that they've got an advantage. When I'm following a Ligier driver, we both take that corner flat out but I lose 200 / 300 rpm in comparison to the French car* ».

On Saturday afternoon, we asked Alan how he thought the race would go. His reply would ring in the ears of either of the Ligier drivers after their defeat the next day : « *The important thing is going to be to look after the tyres. The bloke who is careful with his tyres will win* ».

His prediction came to mind when Alan was talking about his race in the calm of the Williams motorhome one the fans had dispersed. He spoke quietly, without the least excitement, almost unaffected by his win. « *Laffite went really quickly at the start. Perhaps he oversheated his tyres* ».

Alan, on the other hand, didn't really attack during the opening laps. Like a cunning fox, he bided his time, waiting for the right moment. Frank Williams and he had discussed these tactics after the warm-up, and Alan followed the script perfectly. « *I decided beforehand not to have a huge battle at the start. Laffite really was surprisingly quick though. After a few laps, I overtook Pironi easily enough because I was quicker out of the corner before the straight which meant that I was quicker on the straight itself and was able to overtake. As for Laffite, I just waited until his tyres went off. I was able to count on my front 15 inch tyres, which were certainly cooler than Jacques' 13 inch tyres. And that's just what happened* ».

The Williams win, and the way it was achieved, was the ultimate step in a logical progression. Fifteen inch tyres turn fewer times than the 13 inch versions on the Ligiers, which allowed Jones to look after his tyres better. The Australian made the right choice. Besides, Patrick Head

said after the race, « *that the game is to work out exactly, which are the best tyres, or least to work out how the cars may best be adapted to those tyres* ». A modest man is Patrick.

So was it an easy win ? « *Certainly not* », said Jones. « *In fact it was one of the most difficult. I couldn't relax at all nor relieve the pressure throughout the entire race. Normally the race is over after one has driven three-quarters of the distance. But this time, if I'd made the smallest mistake, I would have wiped out all that I'd gained* ».

Only after two thirds of the race had been run did Jones overtake Laffite. The latter quickly dropped back, but Pironi was threateningly close right to the end of the race. « *That type of race is certainly very satisfying* », smiled Alan, « *but in future, I'd like to be a little easier* ».

Alan Jones, Frank Williams and Patrick Head used what was available to them in the best possible way and really looked like a World Championship-winning team. The Ligier team, however, weren't as confident and suffered from small things going wrong.

Alan Jones has never made any secret of his real aim : to win the World Championship. He seems to be more and more certain as the season progresses, that he's going to win and his team are capable of getting him there, even though they may well be pushed hard by the Ligier team.

« *I've now got 37 points which is certainly a considerable advantage over my rivals* », said Alan. He noticed our surprise at his score, but continued : « *Yes, 37, because I count those nine points that I won in Spain. That was a perfectly normal win as far as I was concerned. I had to work as hard as ever, we did all the laps, the race wasn't stopped early, drivers risked their lives as Reutemann did, he had a bad crash. I don't see how anyone can say that we raced like that for nothing* ».

« *In order to win the World Championship, you have to have a good car, good organisation and some luck* », stated Alan, as might any of his rivals. He certainly has the former two at his disposal. And with a little help from the third, the Williams driver will be hard to beat. Piquet is his nearest rival in the championship table, but he's at a disadvantage being the only driver in his team to be a front runner. The Ligier drivers run the risk of taking points off one another. But a lot of things have happened since the series began, and a lot more things could happen. That's exactly what's worrying Frank. « *We've only got a tiny three point lead over Piquet, who has been finishing most of the races. But it's a good feeling to have beaten the French in France. The problem is they'll be trying very hard to get their own back in England ...* ». □

PATRICK DEPAILLER

Patrick Depailler is a man who is waiting for his promise to be fulfilled. He's waiting patiently with quiet confidence — yet tremendous determination — for he's a man who's sure of his own capabilities and future He's enjoying his current position. It may not be very fruitful but he sees it as a transitional stage. He's been a long way down, and he thinks that the future will be good. He's still ambitious, an ambition strengthened by his need to take revenge on what's happened in the past, and for himself.

by Eric Bhat

YOU SEEMED TO BE REALLY ON — FORM FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX. WAS THAT THE FIRST TIME THAT PATRICK DEPAILLER WAS HIMSELF AGAIN ?

I was almost a hundred per cent at Kyalami. I was able to set a quick time in practice, although I wasn't absolutely right for the entire race. I would have been able to do around 30 laps at a competitive pace, not more. But that didn't happen because the car wasn't right. However, I said at the start of the season that I would be fit by Kyalami. I proved that to be correct. I felt really good at Long Beach. I would have been a hundred per cent competitive throughout the face if the car had lasted.

AFTER THE SOUTH AMERICAN RACES, YOU SAID THAT THE ALFA ROMEO 179 WAS GOOD FOR THE MUSEUM. YET YOU WERE COMPETITIVE AT BOTH MONACO AND LONG BEACH. APART FROM YOUR OWN PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL PROGRESS, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS ?

I still think the same : the Alfa 179 is a museum-piece. We have to use that car until the new one is ready. We're limited in using the 179 in that the chassis isn't ideal. We can't improve the car, or at least, we can't improve the car any more. While we have to use the car, it's a nuisance, because we're not making progress and we're not going well in races.

LET'S GO BACK TO THAT LACK OF COMPETITIVITY WHICH YOU'RE BLAMING ON THE 179. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BASIC PROBLEMS.

It's a bit heavy and doesn't really have enough downforce, but we know why. Furthermore it's not very reliable. It was very heavy to start with and it really needed miracle to lighten it. A heavy car isn't necessarily a solid car to start off with, and once you start lightening it, it becomes more fragile. The new car won't be same at all. You can't build a car as badly as they made the 179. But that's quite normal. You have to start somewhere and the team has learnt a lot very quickly.

HOW IS THE TEAM ITSELF RUNNING ? ARE THERE STILL PROBLEMS ?

It's beginning to go better. There are always problems within teams, even winning teams. We had them in the Tyrrell team, even though I think that they're one of the more experienced and better organised teams in Formula One. Alfa Romeo accept the criticism provided it's justified. They really want to show progress. They want to win. They've got what it takes : the brains and the money.

CURRENTLY THEIR GREATEST ADVANTAGE WOULD SEEM TO BE THE V12 ENGINE. DOES THAT HAVE PROBLEMS WITH RELIABILITY ?

It's certainly a very powerful engine. But as I was saying, it can't make up for the weak points in the car. We're not using all of the power to our advantage. When we start using a car that works as well as the best of them, the engine will be working to the maximum of its capabilities. And contrary to what one might think, it's really a reliable engine. The oil leak that caused my retirement at Monaco wasn't an engine fault but caused by a chassis weakness because an engine mount broke.

THEY SAY THAT CARLO CHITI IS STUBBORN AND RUDE. HOW HAVE YOU GOT ON WITH HIM IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS ?

Up until the end of last year, I didn't know the man, I thought he was dreadful. In actual fact, he's very shy which is why people don't really know what he's like. I have worked closely with him December. He's intelligent, enthusiastic, talented and very kind.

IS HE PERHAPS TOO KIND ? HE WANTS TO RUN A THIRD CAR FOR VITTORIO BRAMBILLA AND YOU DON'T APPEAR TO BE HAPPY ABOUT THAT.

I like Vittorio. It's just that I think it's wrong to try and run a third car, whoever the driver. I don't think it's possible to run three cars

YOU MAY SAY THAT, BUT DURING THIS SPRING, IT'S PROVED TO BE A SEMI-COMPETITIVE CAR. HOW CAN YOU SAY IT'S NOT A GOOD CAR ?

Let's say that we've managed to extact as much as we can from an average car. What we lack is a car that is capable of running with the best, leading races. However, that's what we're aiming at. The Alfa V12 is fantastic. However, the chassis isn't up to the same standard.

YOU WERE THOROUGHLY COMPETITIVE AT MONACO, RACING RIGHT IN THE SLIPSTREAM OF THE BEST OF THEM : WILLIAMS, LIGIERS AND BRABHAM. WERE YOU ENCOURAGED BY THAT ?

Monaco is a unique circuit. It's slow. A bad car, if it's set up properly, goes well at Monaco. You do things at Monaco that you don't do elsewhere. You cheat a bit and you find that you have a well-balanced car. At Paul Ricard for exemple, you need a car that's quick on the straight and fast in the corners. You can't find any way round it. You adjust the aerodynamics but you don't lessen downforce that it becomes embarassing. At Monaco, you can compensate, play one element off against another and yet still have a perfectly balanced car. And in the final analysis, you can still be competitive. You have to have good traction at Monaco, and you have to be able to corner quickly in slow corners. I set the car up at Nogaro during private testing and we were really quite competitive during the Monaco Grand Prix. What's more, the car felt good there.

THE 179 MAY NOT BE A FRONT RUNNER AS YOU HAD HOPED, BUT YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT ALFA ROMEO HAVE DONE WONDERS WITHIN THE SPACE OF A FEW WEEKS.

Well, a team like Alfa Romeo who start from scratch can do little but progress. Everyone is trying to learn about the problems of racing. They're hungry to win, they love racing, they're able to work hard and they've proved it. With their current experience they're able to build a new car very quickly.

YET THE NEW CAR HAS BEEN DELAYED. IT HASN'T BEEN BUILT AS QUICKLY AS EXPECTED.

It's true, it's not ready. But there are a lot of question marks in Formula One currently : skirts or not, turbos or no turbos ? But the engineers also wanted to try out a lot of different configurations on the 179, and that has also delayed the new car. Of course, that will make it that much better but I don't think it's going to be ready before the Italian Grand Prix. I think it's going to be a quick car. It's not going to be revolutionary, but very well designed around the V12.

IN WHAT AREAS CAN THE 179 CONTRIBUTE TO THE 180 AND IMPROVE IT ?

One never designs the same car twice in Formula One. The car's in a constant state of development, refining details, improving the breed. On occasions, one carries the development even further, such as is the case with aerodynamics currently. The Alfa Romeo people are doing their research on the 179 in order to make their future 180 that much better. It will be an improved Formula One car for that reason. The 179 isn't really a proper Formula One car, it's more a test laboratory car.

properly, especially Alfa Romeo who are still learning and who are trying to prepare a new car.
It would be to the detriment of the other two cars' results. I told them what I thought of the idea. I said that we weren't trying to win the Le Mans 24 Hours. They seem to have understood.

FROM THE OUTSIDE, CARLO CHITI APPEARS TO BE A VERY RESOLUTE TEAM MANAGER. IS THAT TRUE ?

He's the man in charge of everything. He's firm but a good team manager. Then again, he's not a dictator. He knows about racing, he knows he has to put things in order of importance, and that's not easy. He's a clear thinker. He has to do everything, he's the boss — fortunately, because there has to be one boss.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TECHNICAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN THE ALFA ROMEO TEAM ?

The mechanics at the track are the front men of this framework. I don't know all the people involved. I haven't met all the engineers within the technical framework of the team. There are a lot of people working in the racing team. The whole structure gives the impression of being very solid and very competent. It's very reassuring.

IT'S OFTEN SAID THAT YOUR TEAMMATE BRUNO GIACOMELLI ISN'T GOOD AT SETTING UP A CAR. IS THIS TRUE ?

He doesn't appear to me to have any problems in that area. Bruno has improved a lot. Perhaps he's even made too much progress ! He's going too well for my liking ! Serious though, I like Bruno a lot and I get on with him very well.

LAST AUTUMN, YOU HAD THE CHOICE OF STAYING WITH LIGIER OR JOINING ALFA ROMEO OR WILLIAMS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT YOUR FIRST HALF SEASON, DO YOU REGRET YOUR CHOICE ?

Not at all. I fell fine within the team and I'm very happy there. I don't have any regrets. If I am to have misgivings, I will have them at the end of the season. I think I'm going to win a Grand Prix this year. I hope to win one. That's been my aim since the beginning of the year. I still hope to win a race.

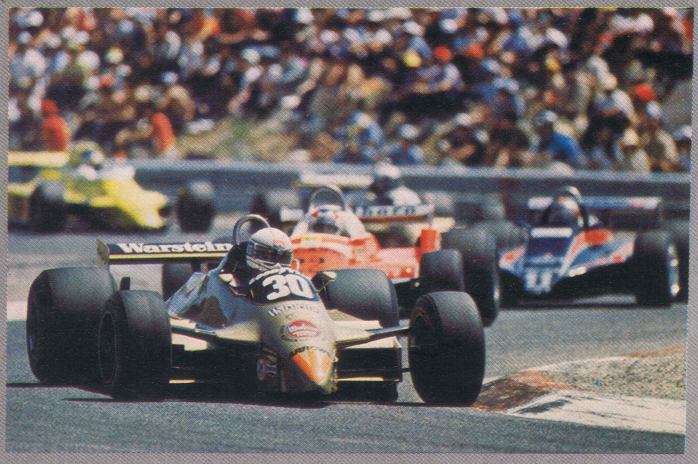
BUT YOU DON'T FEEL AT ALL DISAPPOINTED NOT TO HAVE EVEN SCORED A POINT IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ?

That doesn't worry me at all. We're working on getting the new car thoroughly reliable. I don't have any illusions : the 179 will never be very reliable. However, it isn't a complete waste of time using the car because it's working towards the new car. The Alfa was never a potential World Championship winner. And I wasn't a potential World Champion during the early races. I didn't really need a race-winning car. In the extreme analysis, it might even have been a disadvantage to have one because I wouldn't have been capable of winning and everyone would have blamed me. I've been very happy with the way the season has gone. I keep remembering that a year ago I was in hospital for an indeterminable period. Now everything's going well. The Alfa Romeo team is oiling its wheels. At the end of the season we'll work out what we've accomplished.

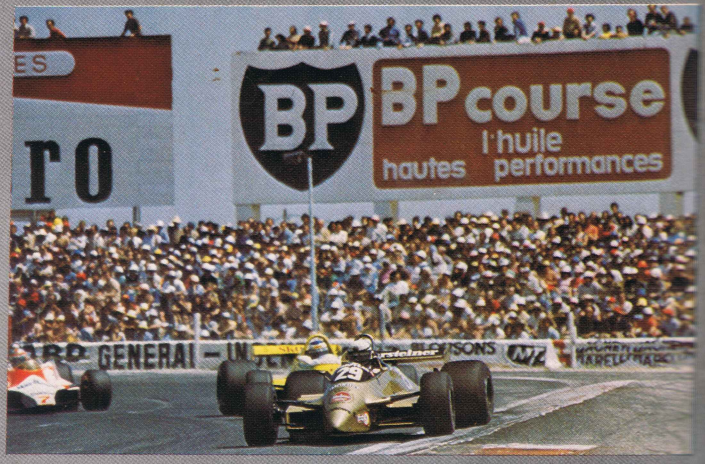
THE FILM OF RACE

After practice one might have expected a Ligier-Renault duel during the race. Instead it turned out to be a Ligier-Williams battle. At first it looked as though it might be a one man show by Jacques Laffite who pulled away on his own during the opening laps. But then Jones managed to draw away from those behind and slowly caught up the leader. He overtook Laffite on the 35th of the 54 lap French Grand Prix. From then on, the Australian had the race in his pocket. Neither Laffite nor Pironi could stop him taking the chequered flag.

1. Jacques Laffite leads from the start. Jones slots in behind him. Further back, Jabouille pulls off.



4. Mass leads the rest in front of Depailler, Andretti, Patrese and Rosberg.



5. Sixth lap : things are going on back there. Patrese has passed Rosberg and Watson begins to challenge the Finn. Three laps later, the Fittipaldi leaves the road.

PRACTICE

There was a strong local wind called the Mistral blowing over the Circuit Paul-Ricard during the first practice session. It caused a few tricky problems of stability at certain points around the circuit, although it helped everyone to get down the long straight that little bit quicker. Ricard's straight is one of the longest to be encountered throughout the season, and ironically, it's called the Mistral. The three teams to show well during the first session were Ligier, Renault and Williams. Laffite set the best time in front of Arnoux, Pironi, Reutemann, Jones and Jabouille. The Renaults were expected to be easily quicker than the rest, but both Arnoux and Jabouille complained of a lack of grip, and Jabouille also had an engine problem. Piquet, Prost, Giacomelli and Depailler – who had crashed at the end of the morning session – completed the top ten.

The wind had dropped somewhat by Saturday afternoon for the second qualifying session, although the temperature

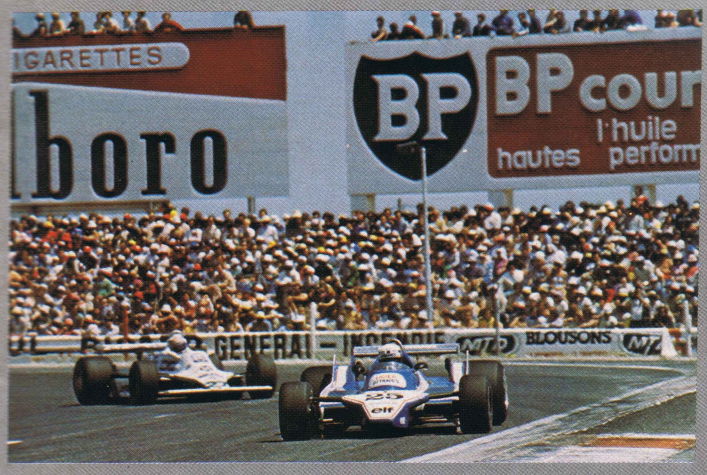
Laffite had the best start and quickly pulled away from the rest

2 →

2. First lap and Laffite has already pulled out a slight lead. Pironi is now second and appears to be the first obstacle for anyone wishing to challenge his team leader...

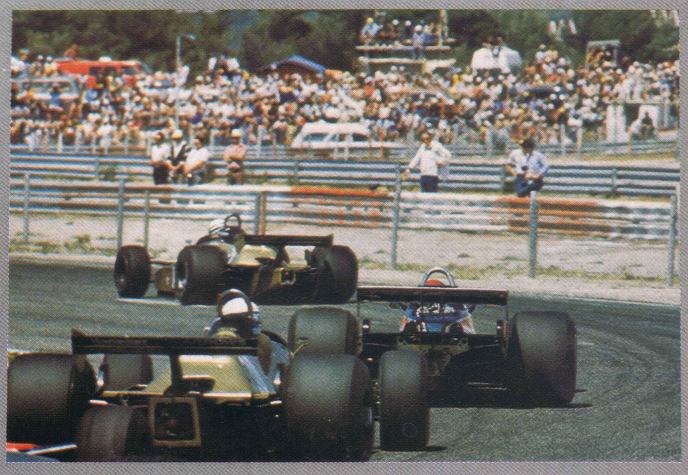
3 →

3. ...But Arnoux overtakes him on the second lap. As well as Rene and Didier, the bunch following the leader includes Jones, Piquet, Reutemann and Prost. No one else is there.



6 →

6. Jones begins to attack. He has overtaken Arnoux and challenges Pironi whom he overtakes on the seventh lap.,



7 →

7. Mass, Andretti and Patrese battle for tenth place.

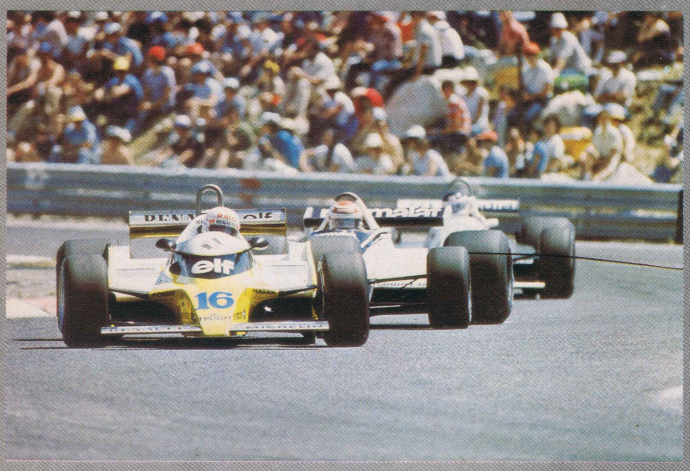
had gone up a little. The track was consequently a little slower, but Pironi set the best time in this session in front of Jones, Laffite, Arnoux, Reutemann an Jabouille. The first six were still the same, if in a different order. However, the times of the first ten weren't improved from those the previous evening. The first place change was eleventh. Surer was the man to occupy that position on the grid after both he and Mario Andretti pushed John Watson down a couple of places.

Basically, the Ligiers, Williams and Renaults were the favourites for the race, although both Jabouille and Arnoux had broken engines during this second qualifying session. Brabham, Alfa Romeo and McLaren could hope for a top six placing. The others would need a lot of luck to finish in the points.

RACE

Jacques Laffite started well and had a relatively easy time during the opening laps, despite using his spare car. He quickly pulled away from the rest, partially because Pironi, Arnoux and Jones held one another up in their battle for second place.

The start had already claimed one of the favourites. Jabouille raised his arm on the grid when he felt a driveshaft break and →



8 →

9 →

8. Arnoux slips back : Pironi and Jones have overtaken him, Piquet's the next to do so. Reutemann is sixth.

9. Two of the early race heros : Villeneuve and Depailler who fight over seventh place on the 19th lap.

12 →

13 →

12. It's Pironi's turn to worry his team leader. He takes second place on the 42cnd lap.

13. The Arnoux-Reutemann duel has continued throughout the race, but the Argentine just can't find a way past.

parked his car on the grass once the field had got away.

So Laffite was the first the leader. Pironi was second after the first lap in front of Arnoux, Jones, Reutemann, Piquet, Prost, Giacomelli, Villeneuve and Surer. The next bunch was led by Mass.

Arnoux did his best to keep the Renault flag flying up at the front, in spite of Pironi and Jones. Arnoux took second behind Laffite on the second lap, and managed to hold on until the fifth lap when Pironi got past. Arnoux dropped another place to Jones a lap later, and the Australian gained on Pironi and took him on the eighth lap. The three cars fought very hard for those places, for sometimes all three would be fanned across the track going into the Signes corner.

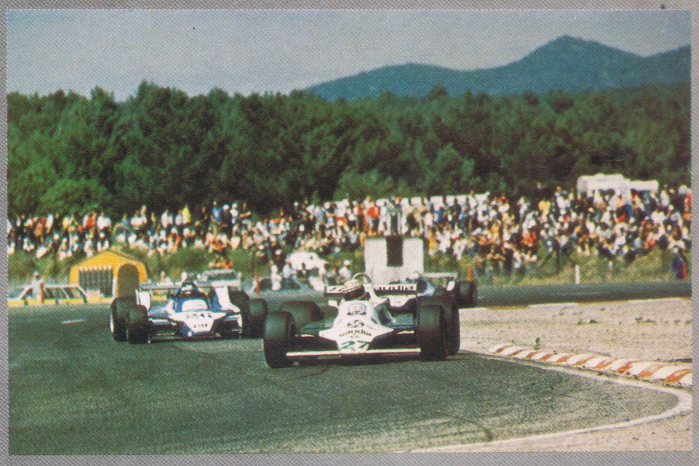
But on the eighth lap, the positions seemed a little more settled than they had been. Laffite led with a six second gap to Jones and Pironi. Then came Arnoux who was being caught by Piquet, the latter having overtaken Reutemann on the second lap.

Three heros at the start of the race were Alain Prost, Gilles Villeneuve and Patrick Depailler. Prost was sixth in front of Reutemann until the Frenchman stopped

Little by little, the Williams caught up the Ligier.

10 →

10. Behind them, Surer, Patrese and Watson dispute ninth place.



11 →

11. Jones has gradually crept upon Laffite and overtakes him on the 35th lap. His win is in the bag.

14 →

14. Two chequered flags in a row for Alan Jones, but this win is irreversible.

15 →

15. Pironi and Laffite beaten by Jones : a French defeat on home ground.

on the fourth lap. Villeneuve kept his Ferrari right behind the leading bunch. Depailler climbed up from 12th to eighth place within seven laps, but he was to retire shorty afterwards.

Even though Jones had taken second place, the gap to Laffite remained fairly stable in the region of six seconds, that despite Pironi's continual worrying right behind the second placed Williams. Arnoux was overtaken by Piquet on the 11th lap and Reutemann also caught up the Renault but couldn't get by.

Little by little, Jones began to drop Pironi and catch Laffite. On the 30th lap, Jones really began to pull out all the stops, while at the same time, Laffite slowed slightly with minor understeer. The Williams caught up with the Ligier on the 34th lap, and overtook a lap later. From that moment on, Laffite lost ground, losing second place to teammate Pironi on the 42cnd lap. Piquet, however, was too far back to threaten Laffite's third place. But the Brazilian couldn't relax for the Arnoux-Reutemann battle was so intense — and had been since the early stages — that they caught up the Brabham during the closing laps.

Jones crossed the line in first place in front of the two Ligier, Piquet's Brabham, Arnoux's Renault and Reutemann's Williams. Remarkably since the fourth lap there had been no interlopers amongst the first six to finish. Apart from Jabouille, none of the favourites had retired. Obviously the best were not only the quickest but also the most reliable. Behind them, no one had really starred apart from the three mentioned, although Marc Surer's name should be added to that list for a fine performance after a long lay-off. □

Paul Ricard statistics

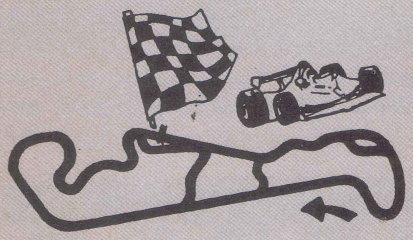
FRENCH GRAND PRIX

Date : June 29, 1980
Circuit length : 3.60 miles
Race distance : 54 laps, 194.95 miles
Conditions : sunny and windy
Attendance : approximately 40,000 spectators.

THE RECORD

(last five races)

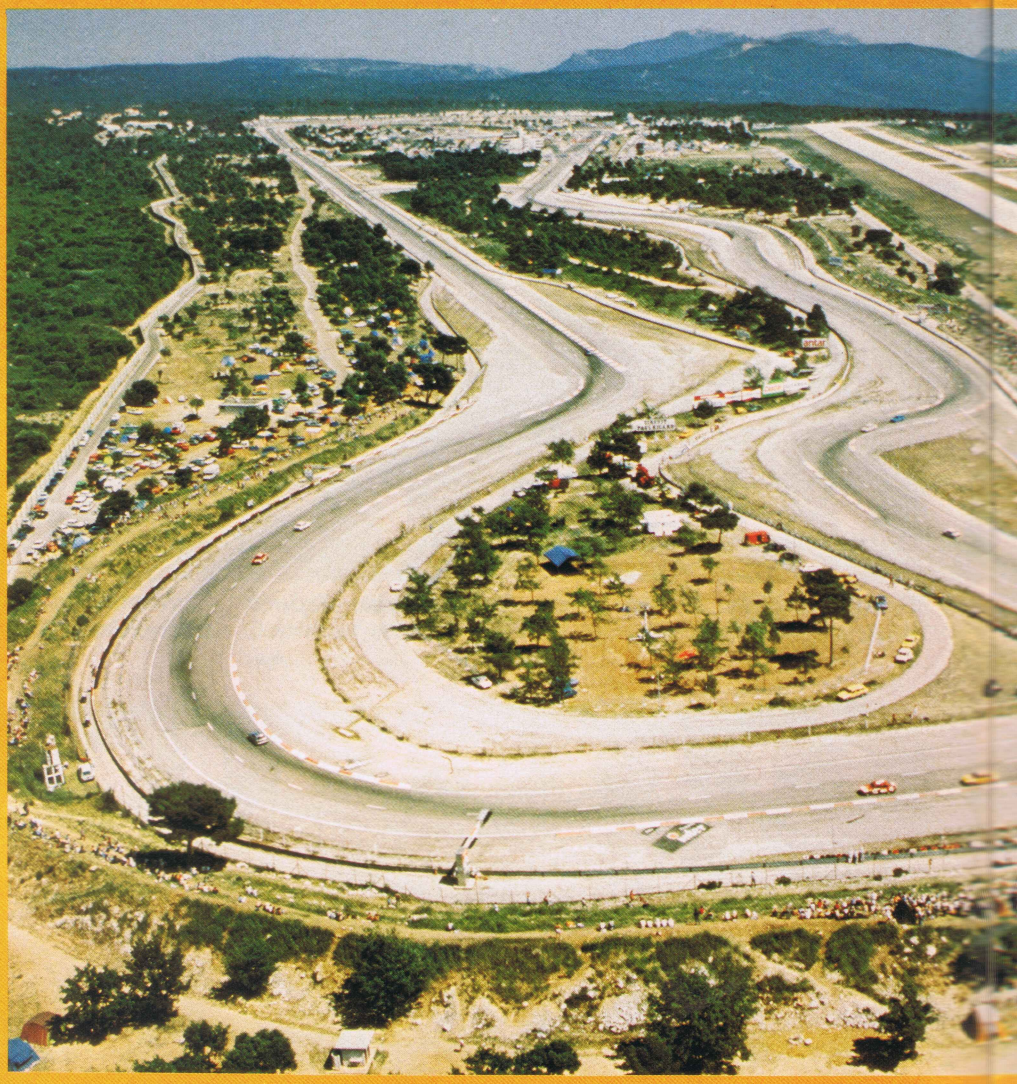
1975 : Lauda (Ferrari 312 T2)
1976 : Hunt (Mc Laren M23)
1977 : Andretti (Lotus 78)
1978 : Andretti (Lotus 79)
1979 : Jabouille (Renault RS 11)



STARTING GRID

LAFFITE Ligier JS 11/15 1'38"88	**ARNOUX** Renault RE 24 1'39"49
PIRONI Ligier JS 11/15 1'39"49	**JONES** Williams FW 07/B 1'39"50
REUTEMANN Williams FW07/B 1'39"60	**JABOUILLE** Renault RE 23 1'40"18
PROST Mc Laren M 29/B 1'40"63	**PIQUET** Brabham BT 49 1'40"67
GIACOMELLI Alfa Roméo 179 1'40"85	**DEPAILLER** Alfa Roméo 179 1'40"89
SURER ATS D4 1'41"03	**ANDRETTI** Lotus 81 1'41"56
WATSON Mc Laren M29/B 1'41"63	**DE ANGELIS** Lotus 81 1'41"66
MASS Arrows A3 1'41"71	**JARIER** Tyrrell 010 1'41"78
VILLENEUVE Ferrari 312 T5 1'41"99	**PATRESE** Arrows A3 1'42"07
SCHECKTER Ferrari 312 T5 1'42"38	**DALY** Tyrrell 010 1'42"77
CHEEVER Osella FA 1 1'42"85	**ZUNINO** Brabham BT49 1'43"14
ROSBERG Fittipaldi F7 1'43"16	**FITTIPALDI** Fittipaldi F7 1'43"21

Non-Qualified :
LEES (Theodore DN 12) 1'44"28
LAMMERS (Ensign MN 180) 1'44"33
KENNEDY (Theodore DN 12) 1'44"56



TIMES IN UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE

	Friday morning	Saturday morning	Sunday morning
LAFFITE	1'39"46	1'40"58	1'49"31
ARNOUX	1'40"25	1'41"15	1'44"18
PIRONI	1'39"62	1'40"38	1'42"78
JONES	1'40"80	1'40"70	1'41"77
REUTEMANN	1'41"40	1'42"55	1'43"24
JABOUILLE	1'40"86	1'41"40	1'43"48
PROST	1'42"00	1'40"76	1'43"73
PIQUET	1'41"81	1'43"38	1'42"96
GIACOMELLI	1'41"68	1'41"41	1'43"29
DEPAILLER	1'41"30	1'40"68	1'42"53
SURER	1'43"65	1'42"58	1'44"89
ANDRETTI	1'42"78	1'42"31	1'44"29
WATSON	1'41"86	1'42"11	1'44"99
DE ANGELIS	1'42"62	1'42"59	1'44"78
MASS	1'44"25	1'42"40	1'46"28
JARIER	1'44"24	1'42"34	1'44"73
VILLENEUVE	1'42"88	1'44"65	1'45"26
PATRESE	1'42"59	1'42"56	1'46"17
SCHECKTER	1'42"97	1'44"91	1'45"85
DALY	1'44"44	1'42"65	1'45"54
CHEEVER	1'42"30	1'43"12	1'46"47
ZUNINO	1'43"91	1'44"46	1'44"05
ROSBERG	1'45"80	1'45"80	1'46"68
FITTIPALDI	1'46"59	1'44"96	1'45"12
LEES	1'48"55	1'45"63	—
LAMMERS	1'47"53	1'43"91	—
KENNEDY	1'45"80	1'45"72	—

OFFICIAL PRACTICE TIMES

	1st session	2cnd session
LAFFITE	1'38"88	1'39"60
ARNOUX	1'39"49	1'39"86
PIRONI	1'39"55	1'39"49
JONES	1'39"70	1'39"50
REUTEMANN	1'39"60	1'39"86
JABOUILLE	1'40"63	1'40"18
PROST	1'40"73	1'40"63
PIQUET	1'40"67	1'41"51
GIACOMELLI	1'40"90	1'40"85
DEPAILLER	1'41"51	1'40"89
SURER	1'43"55	1'41"03
ANDRETTI	1'42"50	1'41"56
WATSON	1'41"63	1'41"81
DE ANGELIS	1'41"66	1'42"43
MASS	1'43"07	1'41"71
JARIER	1'41"78	1'42"10
VILLENEUVE	1'42"21	1'41"99
PATRESE	1'42"28	1'42"07
SCHECKTER	1'42"38	1'42"48
DALY	1'42"77	1'43"23
CHEEVER	1'43"60	1'42"85
ZUNINO	1'43"33	1'43"14
ROSBERG	1'43"32	1'43"16
FITTIPALDI	1'43"74	1'43"21
LEES	1'48"85	1'44"28
LAMMERS	1'44"74	1'44"33
KENNEDY	1'45"91	1'44"56

THEIR FASTEST RACE LAPS

	Time	Lap N°
Jones	1'41"45	48
Pironi	1'41"51	48
Laffite	1'42"34	44
Piquet	1'42"86	51
Arnoux	1'42"41	53
Reutemann	1'42"41	53
Watson	1'44"22	45
Villeneuve	1'43"65	29
Patrese	1'44"35	50
Mass	1'44"27	50
Daly	1'45"82	41
Scheckter	1'43"81	47
Fittipaldi	1'44"51	46
Jarier	1'45"54	10
Cheever	1'45"24	41
Surer	1'45"00	24
Depailler	1'44"74	7
Andretti	1'45"67	16
Rosberg	1'46"22	8
Giacomelli	1'45"48	3
Prost	1'44"87	3
De Angelis	1'50"65	2
Zunino	—	
Jabouille	—	

PIT STOPS AND RETIREMENTS

Jabouille : retired at start, broken driveshaft.
Zunino : retired at start, burnt clutch.
De Angelis : stopped 2cnd lap, retired 3rd lap, clutch.
Prost : stopped 4th and 5th laps, retired 6th lap, broken differential.
Giacomelli : stopped 5th and 6th laps, retired 8th lap, broken chassis.
Rosberg : crashed 9th lap.
Scheckter : changed tyres 10th and 37th laps.
Andretti : stopped on 12th lap, retired 18th lap, gear linkage.
Jarier : stopped on 14th and 15th laps, road holding.
Depailler : changed rear tyres 20th lap, changed front tyres 21st lap, retired 22cnd lap, broken right rear shock absorber mounting.
Villeneuve : changed tyres 26th lap.
Surer : retired 27th lap, gearbox.
Cheever : retired 43rd lap, engine.
Fittipaldi : retired 51st lap, electrics.

PROVISIONAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATION

(after the Argentine, Brazilian, South African, US West, Belgian, Monaco and French GPs)

1. Jones 28 pts - **2.** Piquet 25 pts - **3.** Pironi and Arnoux 23 pts - **5.** Laffite and Reutemann 16 pts - **7.** Patrese 7 pts - **8.** De Angelis 6 pts - **9.** Fittipaldi 5 pts - **10.** Rosberg and Mass 4 pts - **12.** Daly, Watson, Prost and Villeneuve 3 pts - **16.** Giacomelli, Jarier and Scheckter 2 pts.

CONSTRUCTORS CUP

1. Williams 44 pts - **2.** Ligier 39 pts - **3.** Brabham 25 pts - **4.** Renault 23 pts - **5.** Arrows 11 pts - **6.** Fittipaldi 9 pts - **7.** Lotus and Mc Laren 6 pts - **9.** Tyrrell and Ferrari 5 pts - **11.** Alfa Roméo 2 pts.

RESULTS

		54 laps in	
1. JONES	Williams FW 07/B	1h32'43"42	(125.148 mph)
2. PIRONI	Ligier JS 11/15	4"52 behind	
3. LAFFITE	Ligier JS 11/15	30"26 behind	
4. PIQUET	Brabham BT 49	1'14"88 behind	
5. ARNOUX	Renault RE 24	1'16"15 behind	
6. REUTEMANN	Williams FW 07/B	1'16"74 behind	
7. WATSON	Mc Laren M 29/B	one lap behind	
8. VILLENEUVE	Ferrari 312 T5	one lap behind	
9. PATRESE	Arrows A3	one lap behind	
10. MASS	Arrows A3	one lap behind	
11. DALY	Tyrrell 010	two laps behind	
12. SCHECKTER	Ferrari 312 T5	two laps behind	
13. FITTIPALDI	Fittipaldi F7	four laps behind	
14. JARIER	Tyrrell 010	four laps behind	

Fastest lap : Jones, 1'41"45, 128.109 mph **(Record).**

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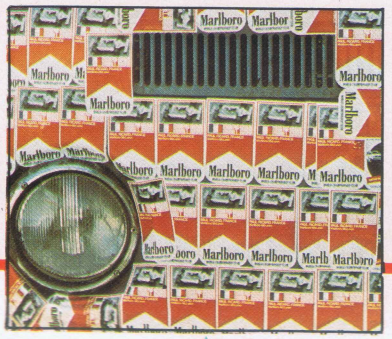
Postcard from Paul Ricard

This Renault 5 turbo was used as an official course car. Will it race ? It will certainly be used in rallies.

Gastronomy and Formula One go well together. The Ligier brains get together with some of the greatest of French gourmets : Messrs Baucuse, Faugeron and Riviere.

An overcrowded pit lane, packed with people. Passes seem to be for sale...

Now old chap, are you working or spectating ?



Some Ligier fans take things to extremes.

LE CASTELLET IN PICTURES

1. Once again Eddie Cheever and the Osella looked promising. However, the still have to finish a race.

2. Another race finish and more points for Nelson Piquet. At the end of the year, it could well be useful.

3. An unexpected night's work for the Ligier team before the race. Laffite had to use his spare car in the race.

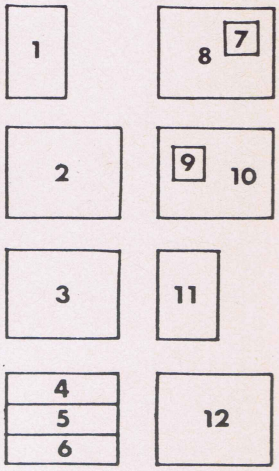
4/5/6. Differing luck for Patrese and Villeneuve on one hand, and Lammers on the other. The former duo were not far behind the first six. The latter was heading for non-qualification.

7/8. Jarier leaves his own tyre marks at the start, a little slalom on the straight.

9/10. Whatever the problems currently, there were some Talbots at the French Grand Prix. While we're waiting for the Talbot-Ligier in 1981, we can happy with some rather earlier Talbot Lagos that raced in the historic car event at Ricard.

11. A lesser known duel on the Formula One grids that between Simpson and GPA helmets.

12. The French Grand Prix, lap by lap.



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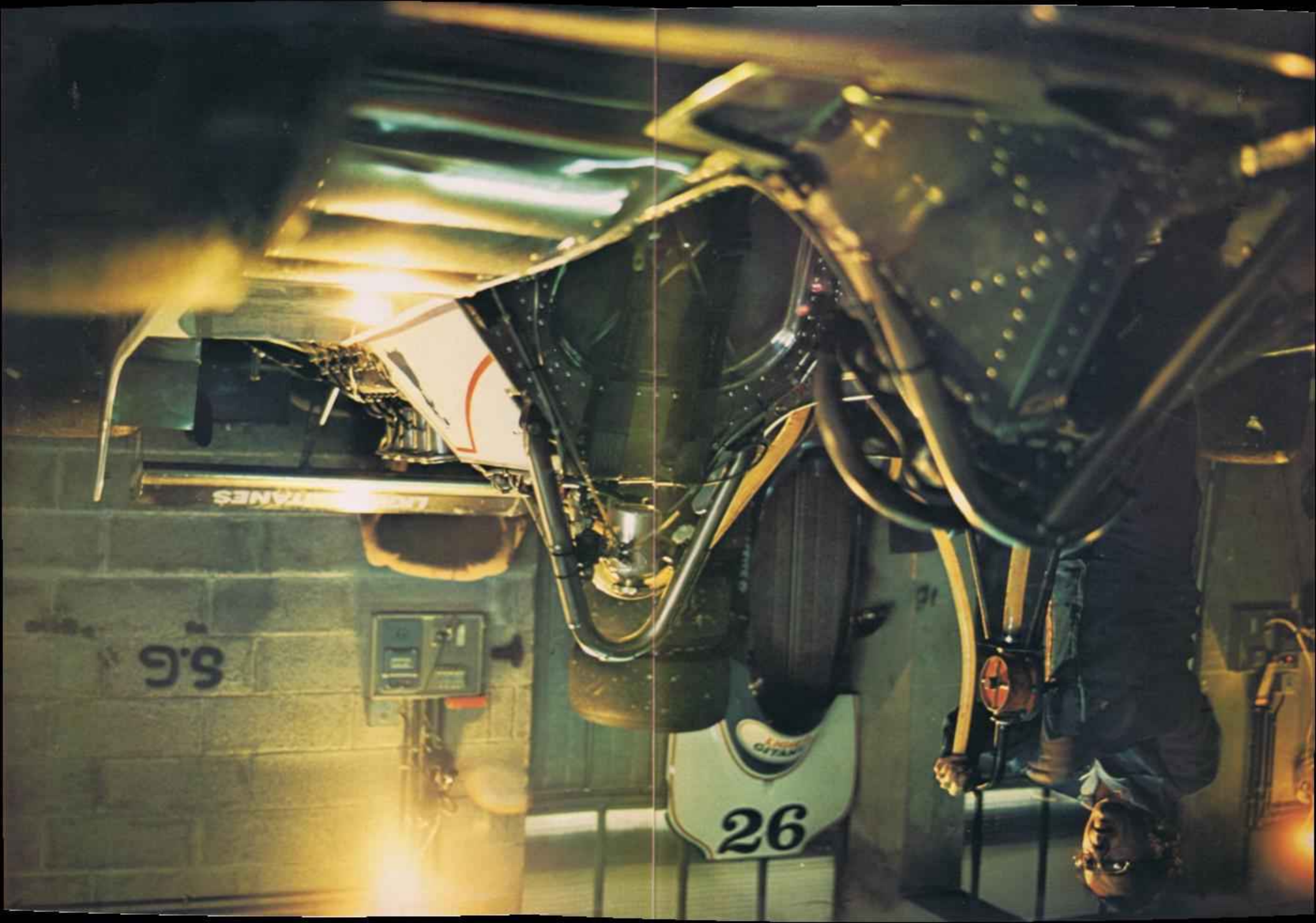
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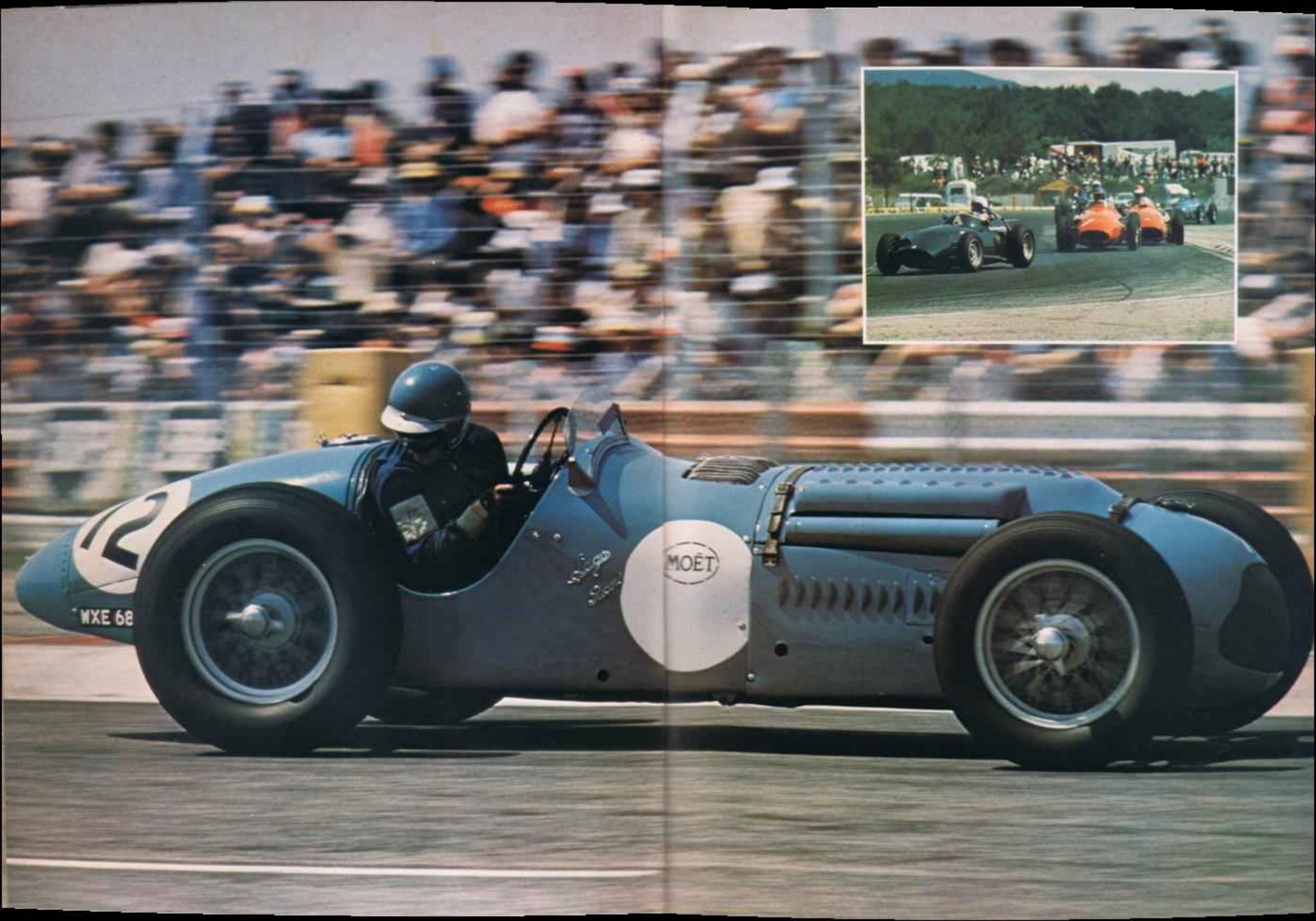
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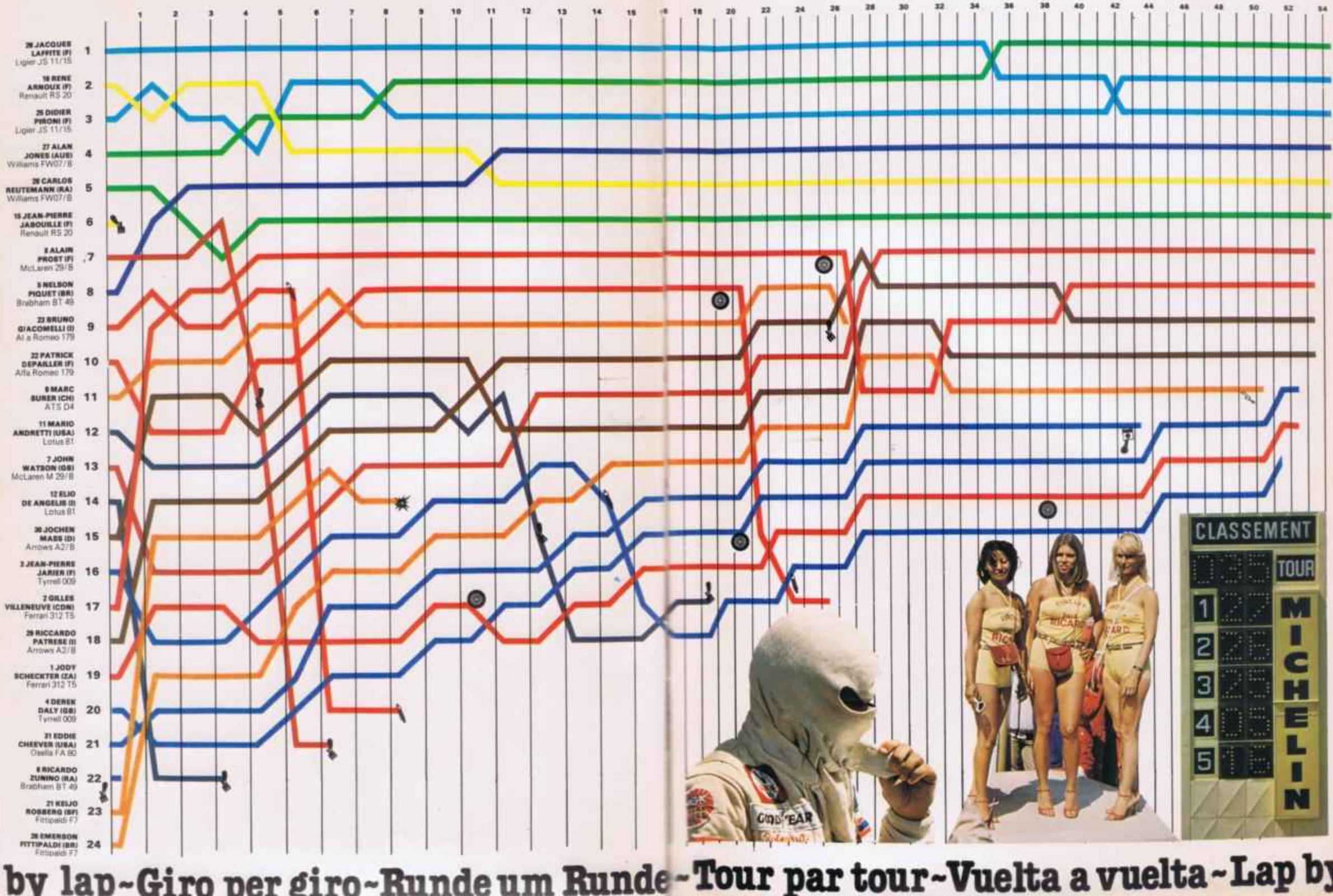
Lap by lap~Giro per giro~Runde um Runde~Tour par tour~Vuelta a vuelta~Lap by la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28 JACQUES LAFFITE (F) Ligier JS 11/15 1
16 RENE ARNOUX (F) Renault RS 20 2
25 DIDIER PIRONI (F) Ligier JS 11/15 3
27 ALAN JONES (AUS) Williams FW07/8 4
26 CARLOS REUTEMANN (RA) Williams FW07/8 5
15 JEAN-PIERRE JABOUILLE (F) Renault RS 20 6
2 ALAIN PROST (F) McLaren 29/8 7
5 NELSON PIQUET (BR) Brabham BT 49 8
23 BRUNO GIACOMELLI (I) Alfa Romeo 179 9
22 PATRICK DEPAILLER (F) Alfa Romeo 179 10
9 MARC SURER (CH) ATS D4 11
11 MARIO ANDRETTI (USA) Lotus 81 12
7 JOHN WATSON (GB) McLaren M 29/8 13
12 ELIO DE ANGELIS (I) Lotus 81 14
30 JOCHEN MASS (D) Arrows A2/8 15
3 JEAN-PIERRE JARIER (F) Tyrrell 009 16
2 GILLES VILLENEUVE (CDN) Ferrari 312 T5 17
29 RICCARDO PATRESE (I) Arrows A2/8 18
1 JODY SCHECKTER (ZA) Ferrari 312 T5 19
4 DEREK DALY (GB) Tyrrell 009 20
21 EDDIE CHEEVER (USA) Osella FA 80 21
6 RICARDO ZUNINO (RA) Brabham BT 49 22
21 KEIJO ROSBERG (SF) Fittipaldi F7 23
26 EMERSON FITTIPALDI (BR) Fittipaldi F7 24
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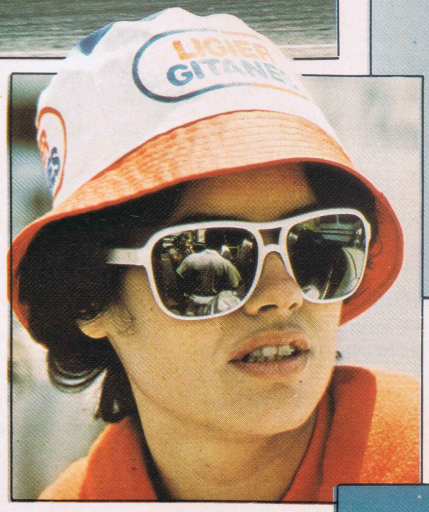
Lap by lap~Giro per giro~Runde um Runde~Tour par tour~Vuelta a vuelta~Lap by la

Postcard from Paul Ricard

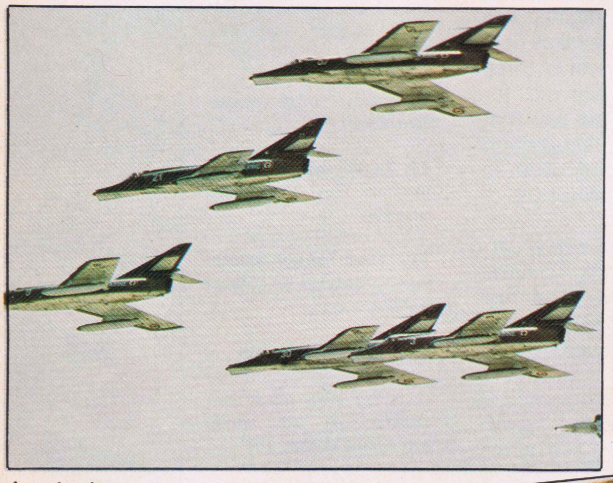
He had a struggle with the Mistral, but still managed to land on the start line.

The hands on the wheel of this Connaught in the historic car race at Ricard and are more used to a pair of drum sticks. The driver is Nick Mason, drummer with the Pink Floyd.



Another Formula One Groupie ? We don't think so, and nor would Valerie-Anne's father, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, president of France.

Alain Prieur broke the world record for motor cycle jumping by leaping over the Paul Ricard footbridge.



Aerobatics from the French team, even noisier than Formula One.

His name is Loïc. Like his famous Dad, he loves motor-cycles and he's not afraid to ride them. However, father Depailler tends to stick to four wheels these days.

126 C: THE FERRARI OF THE FUTURE

The latest Ferrari wasn't at Circuit Paul Ricard for the French Grand Prix, but as it will hopefully soon make its first Grand Prix appearance, we're going to describe it for you anyway. The Ferrari 126 C is to be the second turbocharged car to be seen in current Formula One, following Renault's example. It's the Ferrari of the future.

by Giorgio Piola

This year's Grand Prix season isn't going well for Ferrari Which is why the Commendatore has stepped up work on the 126 C. It was formally shown to the press on Monday, June 9, its paintwork still wet. It's still very much an experimental car. No decision has yet been made as to which turbochargers will be used. The car shown at Maranello in Italy was fitted with twin KKK turbochargers. However, as Enzo Ferrari explained, this was simply one of three possible turbocharger solutions. The Scuderia are also testing with twin Garett turbos and a single Brown-Boveri which is said to cut turbo lag considerably.

But those who expect to see a Renault copy will be disappointed. The Ferrari 126 C is very different. The engine is a V6 like Renault's, but the V is 120 degrees as opposed to the Renault's 90 degrees. The wider angle allows for a different positioning of the turbochargers and various accessories. The general impression given by the 126 C is that it is more sophisticated than the French car, but also more complicated.

The turbochargers and exhausts are fitted within the V of the engine, which causes a tremendous build up of heat. We consider that this will be the main problem with the car. Designer Mauro Forghieri confirmed this when he told us that « *The dispersion of heat will be one of our main worries. The exhaust pipes of a turbocharged engine are 900 degrees centigrade throughout their entire length. On the other hand, on a normally aspirated engine, the exhausts are only that hot for 10 to 20 centimeters and then the temperature drops to around 300 degrees.* »

It's for this reason that there are lateral louvres looking like tiny fins in the high engine cover that's mounted behind the driver. These are intended to send air down to cool the area around the exhausts.

The problem of cooling also concerns the side pods, as Forghieri explained : « *There are two extra radiators mounted in the side pods, two more than in the current car. It makes the side pod air flow particularly important and that's to the detriment of the air flow beneath the car.* »

In spite of these problems, it appears that wind tunnel results are encouraging. The one and a half litre turbo engine takes up a lot less room than the flat twelve three litre engine and that has allowed for bigger side pods. Some people say that this makes the 126C the first real ground effect Ferrari, even though it may seem to be a logical aerodynamic development of the T5.

The Ferrari 126 C is 90 per cent a new car. The turbo engine isn't the only novelty. The monocoque is also new. The fuel tank is higher and longer, which pushes the driving position forward four centimeters.

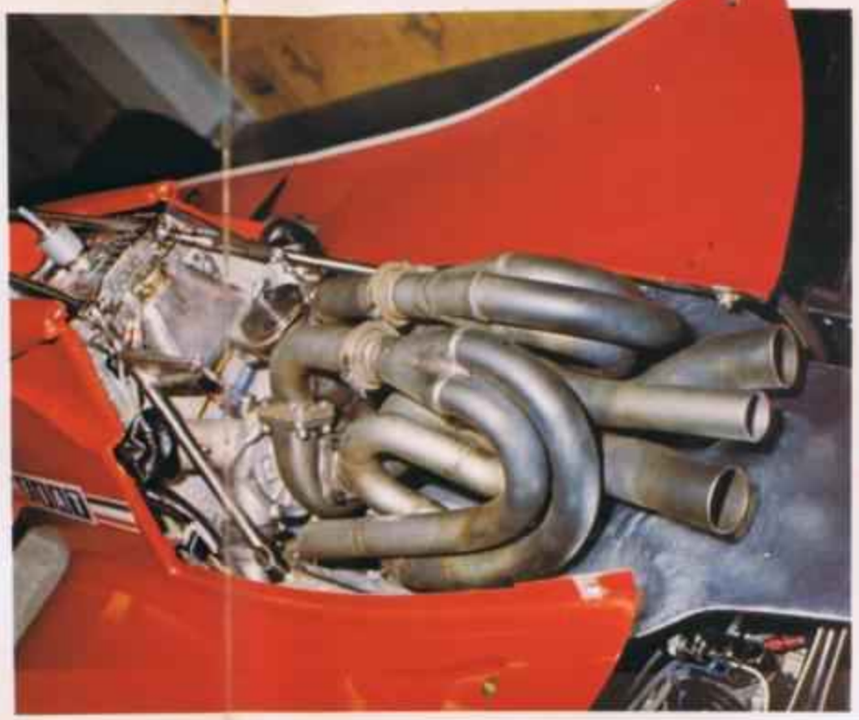
Just as important is the gearbox which has been completely reshaped, even though it is still transversal. It's a lot higher and narrower, not only because it has to work with the new engine, but also in order to leave the lower part of the car free for aerodynamic reasons.

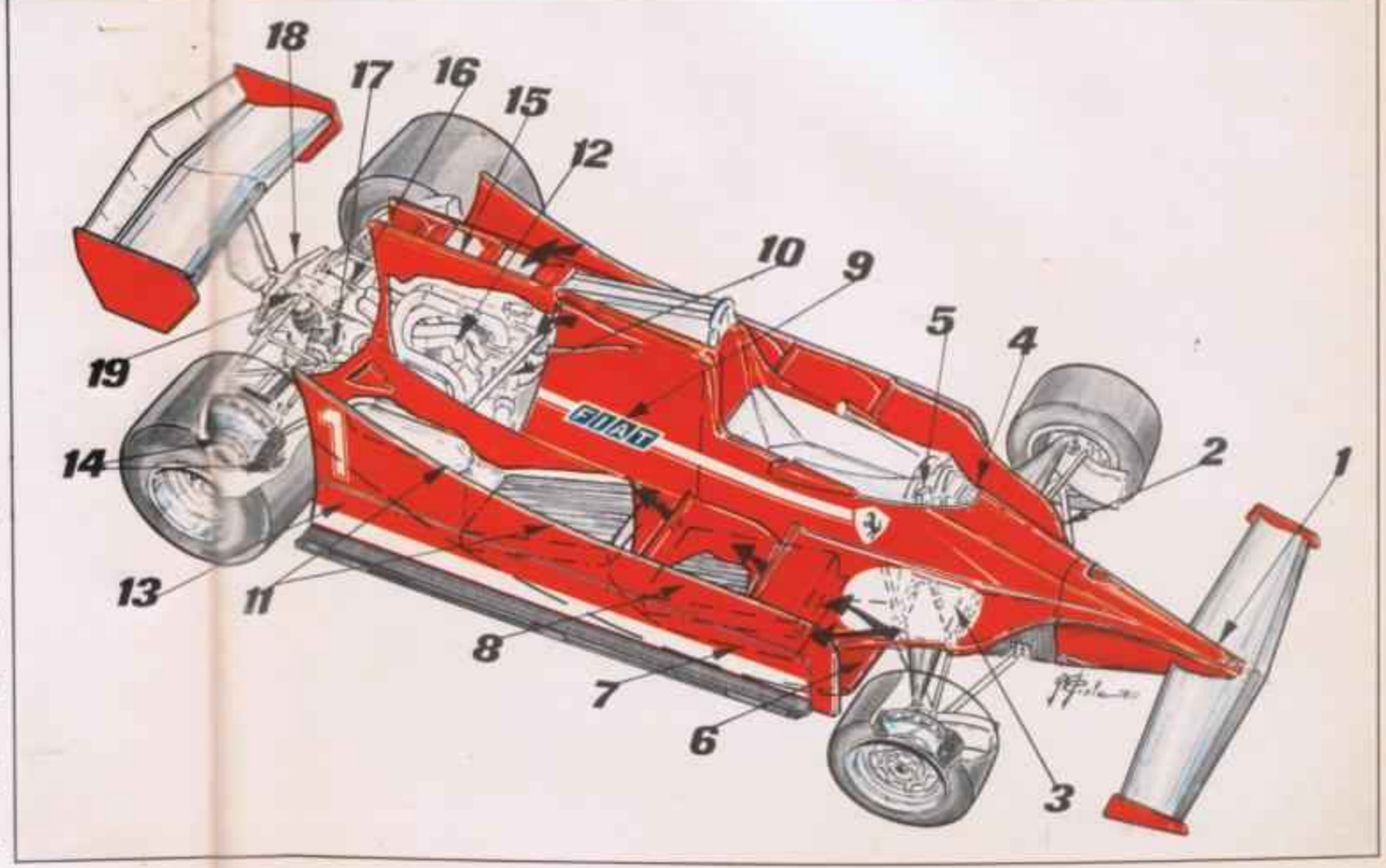
Another interesting point is the new electronic fuel injection which has been designed at the Ferrari factory.

Ferrari admit to getting 540 horsepower from the new engine. Enzo Ferrari said that at 7500 rpm the turbo engine gives 100 bhp more than the flat twelve version. The new V6 gives more power and takes up less room than it's predecessor. So the 126 C should perform better on the tracks than the T5. Ferrari themselves are certainly hoping that it will. □

The central exhausts look like spaghetti.

The futuristic instruments allow for constant temperature read-outs.





1. Very narrow wing support, cutting the big traditional wing in two.

2. The nose of the 126C is very similar to that on an experimental T3 used at the end of 1978.

3. Vertical shock absorbers enclosed in plastic in order not to disturb air flow to the side pods.

4. Injection system mounted in front of the roll-over bar.

5. Digital temperature read-out.

6. Bigger side pods than the T5.

7. The internal air flow for the radiators is divided in two.

8. Traditional radiators : oil on one side and water on the other.

9. Higher and longer fuel tank.

10. Twin turbos mounted in the V of the engine.

11. Two extra radiators working as a heat exchanger.

12. Exhaust system.

13. The side pods are made up of three seperate units.

14. Twin calipers per brake disc.

15. Tall engine cover with air vents to cool the exhausts.

16. Rear anti-roll bar beneath the transversal gearbox.

17. Higher driveshafts.

18. New gearbox casting.

19. Slightly slanting shock absorbers.

PAUL RICARD EXTRA

RENAULT : SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

JEAN-PIERRE Jabouille is very relaxed on this Thursday evening. He's calm yet full of life. He appears to be quite sure of himself and of his capabilities. Doubt and worry don't exist. His morale is at its peak. He's more determined than ever. Tomorrow, this big blond Parisian is going to make a decisive move.

« If I'm going to be World Champion. » he told us a few minutes later, *« I have to win on Sunday. Even with nine points for the first half season, I still have a chance in the World Championship. The next few circuits are going to be in our favour and I can pick up some wins... »*

The idea of winning the World Championship when one's score card is still virgin white would appear to be a kind of mission impossible, even hopeless. *« Do you really think you can do it ? »* we asked him. He gave a big smile. *« Of course I can do it ».* He clearly thought he was going to win.

But seconds after the flag had dropped on Sunday afternoon, Renault Number 15 was parked on the grass beside the grid with a broken driveshaft.

Jean-Pierre Jabouille climbed out his car, his hopes dashed, his heart in his driving boots. He would not be World Champion this year.

René Arnoux, his teammate, went on to dispute a race that he himself admitted was one of the most difficult he'd ever driven. Despite continuous pressure from that most experienced of drivers, Carlos Reutemann, Arnoux didn't make any mistakes and managed to contain the Argentine's pressure. But Arnoux was only fifth. He was also disappointed. It should have been first.

It's inevitable that parallels should be drawn between Dijon 1979 and Le Castellet 1980. Last year, the Renaults dominated on home ground, with the quickest two times in practice followed up by first and third places in the Grand Prix. But there was no such luck this year. The Régie should have been celebrating the end of their third year in racing, and the anniversary of their first win. But instead of the fire from the candles on the cake, there was smoke from blown engines.

Everyone expected the Renaults to dominate their home Grand Prix again. This was because the two kilometer long Mistral straight would allow them to take full advantage of their considerable straight line speed. Furthermore, the team had done a lot of testing at the circuit which meant that they could approach the three day event without the threat of the unexpected. Most of their rivals arrived with the basic intention of finishing first, behind the Renaults.

But things turned out very differently. After the two days of practice, it was obvious that the form book was wrong. Those who predicted a Renault win were considerably reduced by Saturday evening. There was a dreadful feeling of déjà vu. Two years ago, at this same circuit, the Renault team had suffered badly. Jabouille had pitted after just one lap, a cloud of white smoke coming from the back of his car.

So what had happened to the Renaults which had been such firm favourites ? Arnoux was going to start from the front row of the grid, Jabouille from the third. Surely that in itself was encouraging, yet it was slightly misleading. Throughout practice, the Renaults had been anything but dominant. They weren't as quick as they were expected to be, and they were also unreliable, which was very serious.

Jean-Pierre Jabouille and René Arnoux were disappointed during the first day of practice. Both had complained in the morning and afternoon of a lack of grip. *« The car's sliding too much, »* said Jean-Pierre. It was simple confirmation of fears that he expressed a few weeks earlier during the Monaco Grand Prix.

« Last year I was certain that one would need Michelins to win the World Championship. I'm just as certain this year that it will be very difficult to win with Michelin, unless they make progress quickly. »

René Arnoux had set an excellent 1'38"6 during private testing at Le Castellet the previous week-end. *« That testing was very encouraging, »* said Jabouille during the Grand Prix week-end, *« But what I feared then has been confirmed now. »*

Michelin were unflustered by all this, because they regarded Arnoux's second quickest time as being proof that they were competitive. But the Ferrari drivers voiced the same opinions as their colleagues at Renault. Gilles Villeneuve indirectly confirmed that Michelin were off the

PROST'S SHORT-LIVED REVOLUTION

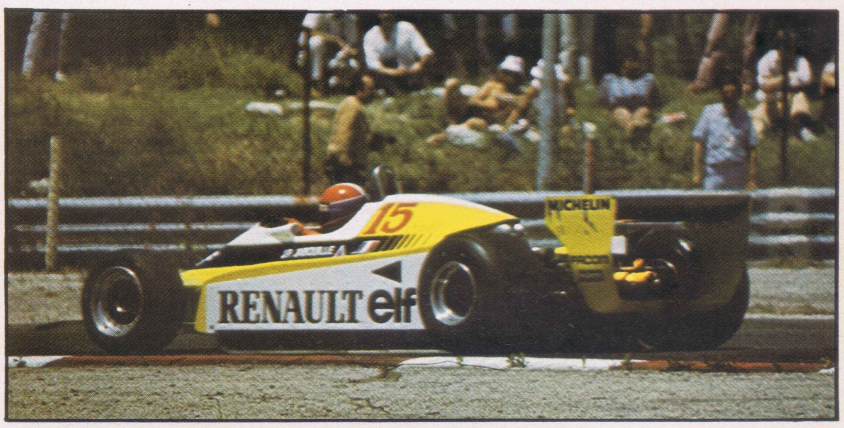
BIG surprise : at Le Castellet, for the first time this season, a healthy McLaren overtook a healthy Williams. The driver of the McLaren was Alain Prost. It was quite a surprise for everyone when he overtook Carlos Reutemann on the third lap.

But it was only a flash in the pan. A lap later, the McLaren headed for the pits following a mechanical breakage. Prost suddenly felt the handling of his car alter dramatically.

« It was a shame, » he explained. *« I was really going well. I went past Reutemann without any trouble. I was quickly catching the leaders, I certainly seemed to be going quicker than them. I realised on the second lap that their cars were starting to understeer already. But my car felt fine. »*

This followed up a very promising two days of practice. Prost reckoned that the

pace by saying, *« they may take a week to find out what's wrong, or they may take a lot longer... but they'll find out at some stage, that's for certain »*.
The atmosphere was thicker than ever in the Renault camp after the final practice session. It wasn't that their grid places were causing the lack of enthusiasm, but that four engines had broken during practice. Jabouille's was the first to go on Friday morning, and then he had another go on Saturday morning. In between time, a turbo gave trouble on Friday afternoon. It reached a peak on Saturday afternoon. Within a few minutes of one another, both Arnoux and Jabouille stopped with their engines on fire.
It was close to disaster for Renault, but one could imagine that they would do everything to stop it ever happening again.
The resident engineers were puzzled by such sudden problems, for they'd had no such problems during previous testing. « It's strange, » said Bernard Dudot, the Regie's top engine man. *« There's nothing new in the engines, they're exactly the same as they have been for the last few races. »*
Some people thought that they'd increased the turbo boost in order to ensure an all-yellow front row of the grid or at least, that they'd increased the boost to make up for what was being lost through the tyres. *« No, »* said Dudot, *« we haven't increased the boost, it's the same as usual. And we don't compensate for things either. We're very limited in the adjustments we can make. »*



Was the long straight responsible for this worrying series of breakages ? Once again, Dudot shook his head. *« That can't be the reason, We've always tested at Ricard. »*
It seemed that no one really knew why the pistons were breaking as though they were made of glass. *« The problem has arisen so quickly that we haven't really had time to analyse it, »* said Dudot.
So the team had to do what they could there and then. The mechanics weakened the mixture to its minimum and dropped the boost by 30 grammes. *« We've adjusted the engines to their lower tolerance limits, »* explained Dudot. It wasn't exactly a guarantee, but it was as much as could be done to try and get the engines to last. And as some of the engines had deigned to hold together during practice, the Renault team still had a chance in the race.
Even so, the Sword of Damocles hung over the two yellow cars at the start of the French Grand Prix. Sadly, the red light burnt through the thread holding the Sword over Jabouille's car, and with the green light went his chances of winning any points. Jean-Pierre had already come to terms with the fact that he wasn't going to be World Champion this year. He never did believe in miracles. Fifth place wasn't much of a reward for Arnoux, but his championship hopes are still alive.

E.B.

M 29 was much better than previously. The team had done a lot of aerodynamic work on the car since Jarama and it was bearing fruit. *« We have less drag and more downforce, »* explained Alain. This was due to new side pods combined with a new rear wing.
« If I'd been quicker on the straight, then I would have given everyone a real shock, » announced a delighted Alain after practice. He was seventh on the grid, right behind the Ligiers, Williams and Renaults, and just in front of Piquet's Brabham.
The McLaren was much improved of course, but Prost's fine performance in the early laps was the result of a final, last minute but risky adjustment made between warm-up and the race. *« I don't usually like starting a race in a car that has been changed without trying it out first. But I took the risk. I stiffened the rear anti-roll bar and took off a little wing in order to eliminate the car's tendency to understeer, which would also save the front tyres. Instead, I set up the car to oversteer slightly. »*
The gamble was worthwile because there was a slight gain in straight line speed as well. Furthermore, Prost felt that the handling was much better than some of his rivals'. But any benefit was shortlived. Alain only just had time to notice how much better his car was before he retired.
But one can't deny that progress has been made with the M 29. *« We've certainly made up a lot but only here at Ricard, »* said Prost. *« The Williams and Ligiers will be miles in front at Brands Hatch »*. His encouraging early laps weren't making him over-optimistic. He still had his feet firmly planted on the ground.

MARC SURER, THE MAN OF STEEL

IT'S Saturday, 2 pm. The second and final qualifying session for the French Grand Prix has just finished. One by one, the shining cars return to the pit lane in the bright Provencal sunshine and line up in front of their pits.

ATS Number Nine is greeted by smiling mechanics who are quite obviously delighted. Marc Surer, the Swiss « convalescent », has just taken eleventh spot on the grid with a 1'41"03. The driver is clearly pleased too. Scarcely has he got out of the car than he fakes a dive into the unsophisticated lens of a clearly amateur cameraman trying to take a close up. It's a revealing prank from a man who is normally so reserved.

Then one hears a stifled laugh from inside his helmet before he limps into the shadows of the pits and disappears.

Jochen Mass is in the next pit. His own damaged legs show that he's had the same sort of experience as Marc. He's the first to talk to Surer.

« Are they hurting ? » he asks, nodding towards Marc's legs which were smashed to pieces against a Kyalami wall last February 28 during practice for the South African Grand Prix.

« No », replies Surer, adding *« not when I was driving, but they are now... »* The smile that accompanied the first part of his reply has changed to a painful grimace which is more expressive than most words.

But the man's pain was quickly forgotten, obliterated by the enormous satisfaction he felt from having proved that he hadn't lost his touch.

A week earlier, Surer had passed the crucial test that so often decides the career of a racing driver who's been in a bad accident. His official return to racing had been at Norisring in West Germany for a round of the Procar championship. He took pole position during practice and finished third in the race after a tremendous climb back through the field after a bad start. It was one of the greatest days in Marc's life.

« It was a marvellous feeling, » he explained, *« to simply sit in a car and realise that one was instantly competitive, just as quick as before, without having to try really hard or adjust oneself mentally. I didn't know what was going to happen. I arrived at Norisring worried stiff, really nervous. Would I still be as quick as before ? Was I going to be frightened ? Quite simply, would I still want to race once I was sitting behind a steering wheel ? »*

Marc was quickly reassured. That tiny glimmer of enormous determination which hides in some far-off corner of a racing driver's mind — or subconscious — was still well and truly alive. And that was essential.

« The question mark over my physical state had been answered at the Brands Hatch a few days earlier when I spent some days testing the ATS, » explained Marc. *« I really suffered badly there, for sure, but then I drove virtually twice the distance of forthcoming the British Grand Prix. Thas was the worst test of all. The BMW M1 which I use in Procar races allows me to move my right leg from the accelerator to the brake and vice versa. But the monocoque of a modern Formula One wing car is so narrow that you can't do the same thing because the ankle is partially jammed into the car. The ATS mechanics modified the pedal box of the car so that I would be able to heel and toe. »*

Marc's aim during the race was quite simple : *« to finish at all costs and perhaps profit from retirements in order to pick up one or two points. »* But it didn't work out that way, despite Surer's efforts. He was seventh after Prost, Villeneuve and Depailler all made pit stops but then his gearbox broke at half distance. *« I hadn't had first gear since the ninth lap when Depailler overtook me. »*

It was a disappointment for the Swiss driver because *« the car was perfect and so were the tyres »*. But the German-sponsored car, once again, suffered from unreliability. *« It's something that has got to be sorted out by the ATS team. Since the start of the season, we've finished two races out of eight. »*

All the same, everyone at ATS could gain some satisfaction from the event. They'd shown well, right behind the leading Ligiers-Williams-Renaults-Brabham, but in front of the Arrows, Lotus, Alfas and Ferraris.

And it all happened on a track on wich Marc was racing for the first time. Marc has no less than 17 pieces of metal holding his damaged ankles together. They're going to be there for another year, until the end of the 1981. In that time, Marc's legs should recover completely.

Between now and then, however Marc's career should take a big step in the right direction.

Mario Luini

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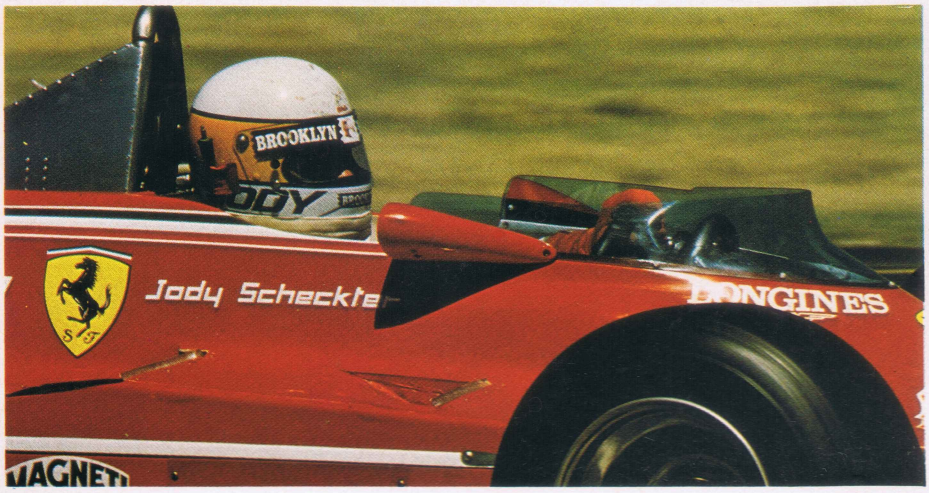


BY JODY SCHECKTER

OUR turbo exists. The Ferrari 126 is fact, it's run, I've driven it. However, even though the car has only just made its first official appearance, we've been talking about it for a long time. To be exact, we started talking about it seriously last season after our Silverstone defeat. Everyone got very excited about it back at the factory. That didn't excite me very much. As far as I was concerned, we didn't need ideas like that to detract from our current programme. It was a good idea for the future but I wanted to win the World Championship and I was worried that the turbo would provide a distraction in the technical department.

However, they continued working on the project and doing their research until they realised that the T5 wasn't really competitive. The turbo project had taken second place to development of the T5 until then. I wasn't too happy about that either. The T5 hadn't worked and we'd proved that it was going to take a lot of work for that car to win the World Championship. I didn't think it was a winner. As far as I was concerned there was no point in bothering with it, unless it could quickly be turned into a winner. But it was obvious that was impossible.

Ferrari soon came round to thinking the same thing and they began to concentrate on the turbo. And now the turbo is in existance. Both Gilles and I have tried it. Gilles was the first to test the car, and then it was my turn, a week before the French Grand Prix.

I must admit that I was immediately impressed. This was because the 126C immediately felt like a racing car. It has a new monocoque, a new engine, a new gearbox ; it's almost entirely new and it was only its second time out when I drove it. Yet I felt that I was driving a racing car. Even during those shakedown tests the chassis felt better than the T5. There's still a big turbo lag from the engine but it didn't give any trouble. To get rid of the lag is going to be a matter of making a few little adjustments, such as in our new injection system and various other electronic parts which are also new.

I've had a certain amount of experience driving turbo cars. I've driven the five litre Canam Porsche Turbo which gave 1100 horsepower, and I did a few races in the Group Six Renault turbo in World Championship of Makes events. But I'd forgotten just how hard you have to drive a turbocharged car. It was made worse by the turbo lag on the new car, but I'd forgotten just how you have to keep the revs high. It's a bit like driving a little two stroke motorcycle. You have to keep the pressure up all the time which means you are constantly changing gear.

In a way, you've got to learn how to drive again. It's a different style of driving. Today's skirts and tyres mean you have to drive very smoothly. I've always enjoyed driving a little sideways, but over the years I've had to adapt to a more careful and cleaner style. That's just as well because you have to drive the Ferrari turbo smoothly.

When a normally aspirated car starts to slide, you can control it entirely by using the throttle. But you can't do the same with a turbo engined car, particularly in slower corners. So you can't afford to slide in a turbo. Even in a normal car you lose time. It's worse in a turbo car because the turbo lag means that you just oversteer even more.

The most important thing is to make sure you have power available all the time. That means you have to set the car up slightly differently because in some corners where the car could be controlled by the throttle, you don't have the power available. I can slide a car out of a corner, but it's impossible to do that in a corner because of the turbo lag. So driving a turbo car is very different to driving a normally aspirated machine.

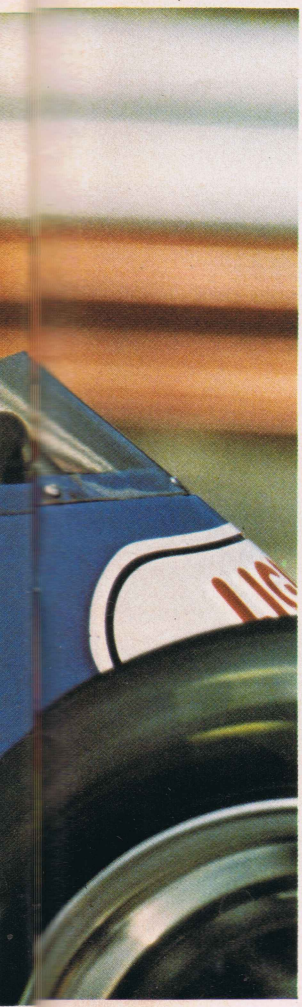
I think the new Ferrari is the car of the future and it's certainly a very good base. We finished a lot of races last year because the cars were very reliable. When we start to race the turbo, I think that we're going to be much more reliable than Renault were when they first ran their car. As far as I was concerned, Renault may have had their problems with the engine itself but it wasn't simply the engine that was the trouble. Whatever car they'd been using I think they would have been unreliable because they were debuting in Grand Prix racing.

But Ferrari have a lot of experience, and I think they'll get their engine going well and reliably much quicker than Renault did. I don't know yet how much of its development will involve me. Enzo Ferrari hasn't said much to me about it because he doesn't know if I'm going to stay with the team next year. I'm not going to take any decision before the end of July, and I'll be going to see him then. Whether the Ferrari turbo influences my decision to stay with the team... well, we'll talk about that another time.

JODY SCHECKTER

J. LAFFITE

D. PIRONI



LIGIER : THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

Guy Ligier had a pretty lively time during the week of the French Grand Prix. First of all there came the agreement with Talbot, a money-based arrangement. And then came the Grand Prix itself. The evening before the race, the Ligiers were definitely the favourites. Guy felt that at last he was going to win in front of his home crowd. He enjoyed the present calmly, a lot more calmly than he'd assured his own future.

by Eric Bhat

M. Perrin-Pelletier (director of Talbot) and Ligier : united for better or worse. They've done one another a favour.

Jacques Laffite and Didier Pironi head for a superb combined result, but victory eluded them. They have roughly the same scores in the championship. Perhaps Ligier will have to make a decision as to which driver should score the maximum points.

The « patron » as the French call Guy Ligier, is an irascible man. He flies into fits of range. They don't last very long, but all the same, they usually shake a few walls, rattle a few windows and cause the guilty to quake in their shoes. And then it's all over just as quickly as it had begun.

Well, the day that Didier Pironi paid his fine, the patron was livid, a really humdinger of a temper, one of his best. The fines, of course, were the cause of the Spanish rumpus. The fire was still smouldering in the ashes, fanned by the two political sides in the affair.

But Didier Pironi wanted to race at Le Mans. Being a professional, he wanted to fulfil his contract with BMW France. He's a responsible bloke, and he wanted to do the right thing. He was sûre he was doing the right thing. Besides, even if he did pay his fine, could Ligier really be upset, because he'd promised Didier that taking part in the Spanish Grand Prix would not cost him his licence ? *« Even if you have to take out a North African licence, you'll still be able to race, »* Guy promised Didier reassuringly. Many of the current team managers are finding that one of their most necessary talents is that of convincing, and Guy's a master at it.

In spite of this promise, the French constructor was furious when he learned what his young driver had done. The anger was of such strength and violence that one feared that Didier might be in permanent and everlasting disgrace. Next year, he'd have to find someone else to drive for. The atmosphere was still pretty thick before the French Grand Prix. Guy Ligier and Didier Pironi glared at one another like a couple of fighting cocks, both trying to avoid direct contact with the other.

The problem was that Guy Ligier was right behind Bernie Ecclestone, and it was hard for him to accept that he'd been let

down by one of his own men. In his eyes, Pironi had betrayed the whole team in giving in to Balestre's demands. It was sheer indiscipline, and also a public insult. Jacques Laffite, it seemed, had to act as an intermediary. He had to use all his charm on Guy, whom he knows well, to make him realise that Pironi could hardly do anything else. It was a typically tactful gesture on Laffite's part. He'd remained rightly or wrongly, blindly faithful to his team patron throughout the whole affair. Finally common sense prevailed and the two parties were reconciled.

This example shows that Guy Ligier's position was strongly allied to the Constructors throughout the recent turmoil in Formula One. Ligier was definitely on the side of the specialised constructors whose living comes from Formula One alone. It was quite obvious where his loyalties lay and that he worked hard within the Constructors group. At least, he seemed to belong to that body alone.

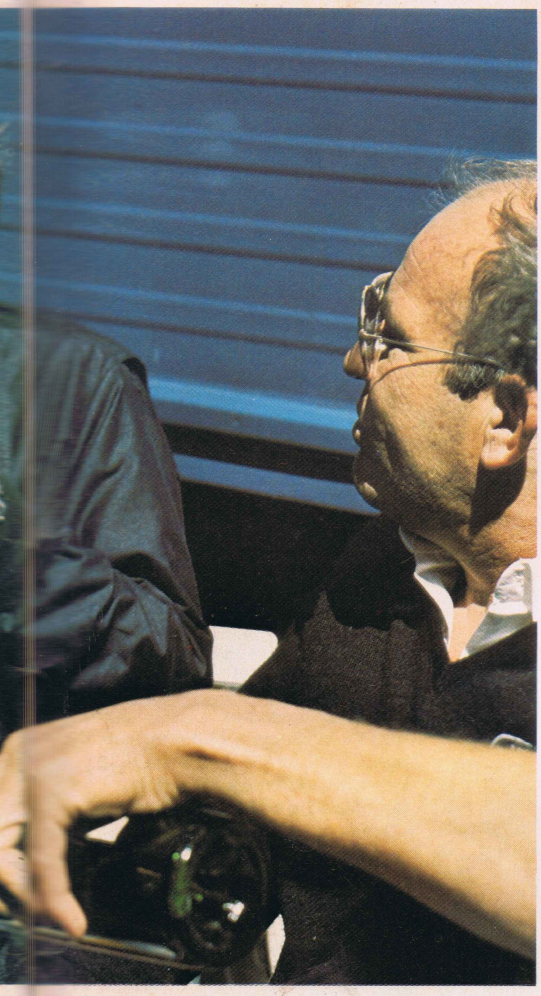
Wrong. What a surprise on Monday June 23 when the Talbot-Ligier agreement was announced. It was a real shock and overshadowed even Jean-Marie Balestre who was strarring in yet another press conference to explain his problems.

At that time, we recalled a conversation we'd had with Guy at Zolder a few weeks previously. Bernie Ecclestone had just surprised everyone by neatly tying up an agreement with BMW to use the turbo engine formerly destined for Talbot. *« Bernie Ecclestone's a clever so-and-so, »* we said to Guy, *« but isn't it rather frustrating for a constructor like you not to have had the same idea ? »* He smiled broadly. *« Frustrating ? No. Ecclestone's action is quite logical. Many of the big car companies are coming into Formula One. It's nothing new. Williams made an agreement with Leyland six months ago. It's becoming more and more necessary to be allied to a big car constructor. But don't you worry, I'm working on it. »*

So on June 23, Guy's recent actions appeared to be surprising in hindsight. At Jarama, he had supported FOCA up to hilt, unlike the representatives of the Big Three, whose numbers he would soon swell. He'd turned his back on his future allies.

« In actual fact, taking into account the fact that the Talbot agreement was nearly finalised, I did think that I should actually side with the Big Three. But I didn't because I had said my bit and taken a stand on one particular side. I decided to see the matter through. You have to know what you want from life. You have to stick by your own decisions. I'd said yes to Ecclestone and I meant it. I had to stick to that viewpoint. I've just said yes to Lagardere and I've go to go through with that too. »

It was Jean-Luc Lagardere, the managing director of Matra who set up the Talbot-Ligier deal. Proceedings were then handled by M. Parere, the president of Peugeot, one of the main partners in PSA. *« Jean-Luc Lagardere is an old friend, »* explained Guy Ligier. *« We've known one*



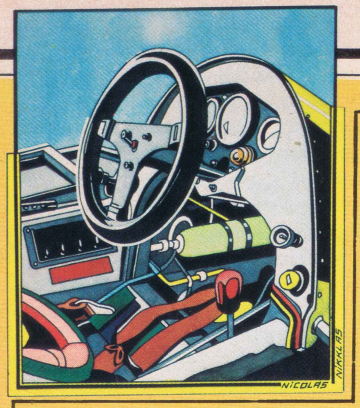
Georges Martin (Matra) with Gerard Ducarouge and Guy Ligier : they're soon to work together again after a gap of two years, but this time with even greater ambitions.

another for seven or eight years.
When Matra were racing prototypes, I used to be the little privateer with my Ligiers which I raced from time to time. I was due to this early friendship that I used Matra engines during the first years of the Ligier Formula One programme. We really are very close, our friendship is based on many years of mutual respect. It's because of him and his help that I'm so pleased today. »
There may well be another reason for Matra's return. Lagardere is a man who is used to success. He's never really been able to accept his one race failure : that of succeeding with the V 12. Over a period of ten years, although missing three years, the engine won just one race. That was in Sweden in 1977. However, the competition departement run by Georges Martin was never disbanded, even though it was only semi-operational. It's going to leap into action again. Georges Martin and Jean-François Robin will be going around the circuits while the design bureau will be working on their V12 and no doubt working on a V6 turbo.
Basically Matra are coming back into racing. But won't the future Talbots be handicapped next season by the old V12 engine, nice though it is ? « No » replied Ligier without the least hesitation. *« The Matra engineers have been working on the engine and developing it even though they haven't been competing. Furthermore, it's shape is just right for a wing-car. I have great confidence in Matra. They've shown that they want to win, and they'll win. »*

Ligier said that it was thanks to Jean-Luc Lagardere that he felt so pleased with his new operation. But he has every right to be pleased. Good fortune isn't the right expression to use when one is talking about the amount of money involved. It must have cost Talbot nearly £750,000 to buy their 70 per cent of Ligier-Sports. On top of that, there's a budget of a little under £3,200,000 and Seita still have to add to that. That's the price Talbot have had to pay to get into Formula One.
It could be said that Ligier appears to have sold his own name. Doesn't it upset him to think that his cars won't bear his name ? *« They'll be called Talbot-Ligiers next year. They'll mainly be Talbots of course, but they'll still be called Talbot-Ligiers, »* explained Guy. *« I've been a constructor for twelve years. I haven't been doing that in order to promote my name because I've nothing to sell. If my team can help to sell Talbots, then I'll be very happy. But the sport still continues. The team is strengthened and that's as much as I could wish for. My aim is to remain the patron. »*
But the support of Talbot will allow the team — which no one would deny is already very competitive — to take a big step forwards. They may no longer be called Ligiers, but there are practicel advantages. There will be a seperate development department, a test team independent of the race team, and of course, a considerable increase in the overall capabilities of the team. *« These are all things that I've been wanting to organise for some time, »* said Ligier, *« but I haven't been able to do so because of lack of money. »*

The Talbot-Ligier marriage won't be consummated until next winter. M. Perrin-Pelletier, director of Talbot was fulfilling his role as fiancé at Le Castellet. His future team were very promising during practice. Jacques Laffite and Didier Pironi were first and third on the grid, and they seemed to have every chance of winning.
But then fate took a hand. It was unexpected, that's for certain. The mechanics were just finishing their Saturday night's work and no doubt looking forward to a well earned rest when one of them discovered a fuel leak from the rear bulkhead of Laffite's car. Panic. It was impossible to repair it there and then. Laffite was going to have to start in the spare car. Instead of going to bed, the mechanics changed as many parts as possible — especially the suspension — from Laffite's race car to the spare, hoping that it would at least appear similar to his normal car. The Sunday morning warm-up wouldn't really be long enough to set-up a completely strange car.
But at the end of the first lap, Laffite pitted with a gearbox problem.
Jacques could feel that things were going wrong and he was justified. He was about to lose the race without even having started it. Jacques was furious. And when Laffite is furious, words as sharp, bright and cutting as flashes of lightening start flying around. Then the storm itself broke. Ligier thundered at the mechanics, his voice booming around the pits. *« I really tore into them, »* he admitted later, regretting it in hindsight.
But people were already saying that a Ligier wasn't going to win the French Grand Prix. In spite of his superb start, Jacques was unable to stop Jones catching him, nor overtaking him. *« The car was understeering dreadfully right from the start. I guarantee I would have won if I'd been driving my own car. »* he told Gérard Ducarouge after the race.
« You can't win every time, » sighed Perrin-Pelletier to try and alleviate the depressed atmosphere in the Ligier motorhome after the race, in spite of Laffite's second place and Didier's third. The comment dropped like a lead balloon.
« Yes, but I've been waiting a long time, » replied Jacques in an instant. He last won in Brazil in 1979, a season and a half ago...
Ligier's big face looked glum for he was as disappointed as he had been happy the previous evening. *« The future is guaranteed thanks to Talbot. I think I did the right thing. »* □

In the cockpits

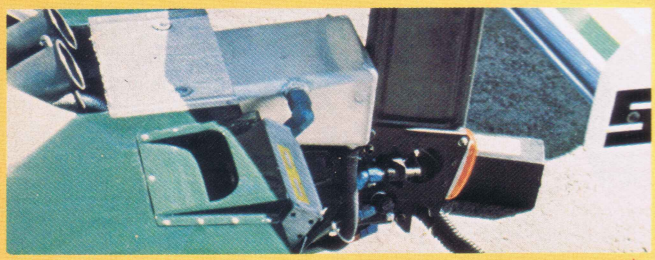


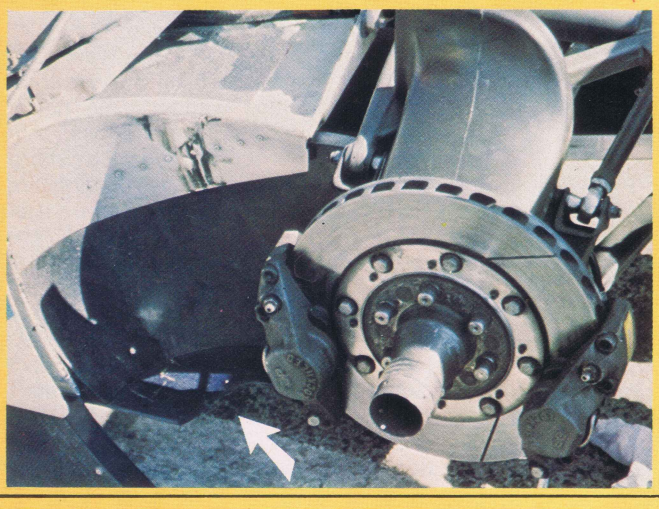
SAUDIA LEYLAND WILLIAMS

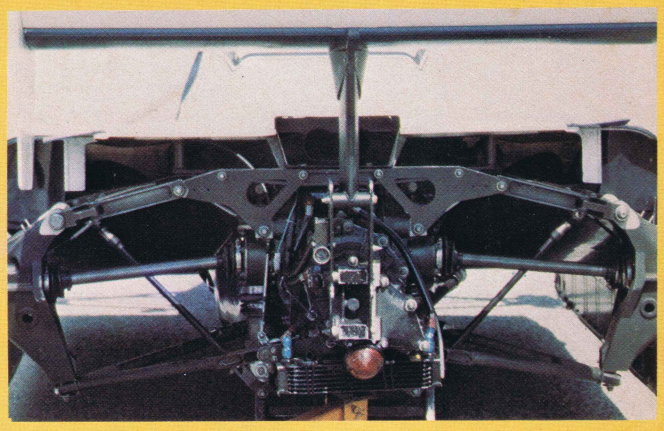
Williams-Ford FW 07/07 :
Alan Jones (AUS)
Williams-Ford 07/05 :
Carlos Reutemann (RA)
Williams-Ford FW 07/06 :
Spare.

The three Williams which appeared at the French Grand Prix were slightly modified. The oil catch tank which was previously positioned in the left hand side pod had been moved to a position in front of the rear wing which had meant that the wing support had also been modified. During practice, the team tried various aerodynamic improvements including little fins beside the rear wheels (see photo) and also to the rear wing. The cars also ran both with and without front nose fins. Finally, a number of different spring strengths were used on all three cars. Alan Jones did a number of laps in the spare car trying out various configurations. Finally, the team found the right set-up on Saturday afternoon which allowed Jones to set the best time during the Sunday morning warm-up, 1'41"8. The Williams team's winning choice included front wheels of 15 inches.

New oil catch tank and modified wing support.







PARMALAT BRABHAM

Brabham-Ford BT 49/3 :
Nelson Piquet (BR)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/6 :
Ricardo Zunino (RA)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/8 :
Spare.

Chassis number eight which arrived in France was completely new and was intended as the spare car. The monocoque was stiffer in certain areas. It was the car that Piquet finally used for the race.
Zunino was unable to repeat his encouraging performance at Jarama during Saturday practice. His car hadn't gone well throughout the weekend, particulary in the twistier sections of the Circuit Paul Ricard.

Piquet's performance wasn't stunning either. Designer Gordon Murray explained that the car was very quick in a straight line but in didn't have good traction. Piquet tried 15 inch wheels on Saturday, but decided not to use them for the race. During the event itself, Piquet held station behind the Ligiers and Jones's Williams. « ***The car was going fine but not well enough to try and overtake those in front*** ».
Zunino's race ended almost before it had begun. The clutch burnt out on the line.
Murray is currently designing two new Brabhams. One will be an adaptation of the current car intended to take the turbo BMW engine, but the other is a completely new car.

RENAULT-ELF

Renault RE 23 :
Jean-Pierre Jabouille (F)
Renault RE 24 :
René Arnoux (F)
Renault RE 21 :
Spare.

The Renault team had done a lot of testing at the Circuit Paul Ricard which meant that they arrived at the French Grand Prix knowing the ground and track very well.

But it all turned sour on them for two reasons. The first was that according to the drivers the tyres weren't working well, while the second reason was that engines suddenly started breaking : four in all throughout the weekend.
Jean-Pierre Jabouille suffered premature retirement when a driveshaft broke on the line, so it was up to Arnoux to keep the Regie's flag flying. The little chap from Grenoble did well, but the team could still have hoped for better than his fifth place.

LIGIER GITANES

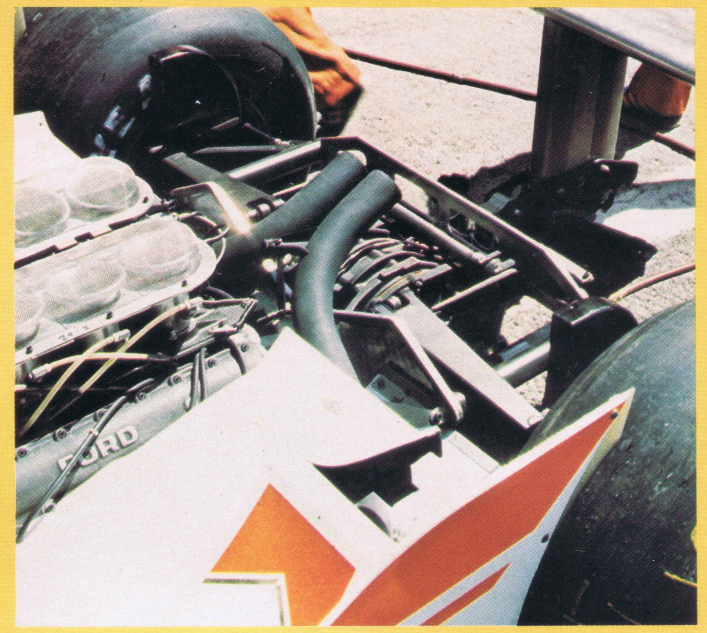
Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-02 :
Jacques Laffite (F)
Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-04 :
Didier Pironi (F)
Ligier-Ford JS 11/15-01 :
Spare.

The Ligiers were adapted to their configuration suitable for fast circuits. That's to say that they had a smaller rear wing and the side pods were adjusted to give slightly less downforce than on slower circuits.
Right from the start, the Ligiers were competitive. They were going so well that some observers reckoned that they were using a type of valve in the skirts which was used to even out the low pressure area beneath the side pods. The team vigorously denied that.
On Saturday Pironi managed to cure his understeer which had slowed him fractionally the previous afternoon, even though he still managed to set a quick time. The Ligiers were certainly considered favourites before the race. They still looked good during the opening laps, but then the strong figure of Alan Jones appeared on the scene and dashed their hopes of victory.

New engine cover similar to those on the Williams.

MARLBORO MCLAREN

McLaren-Ford M29/2 :
John Watson (GB)
McLaren-Ford M29/4 :
Alain Prost (F)
McLaren-Ford M29/3 :
Spare.



The McLaren team had done a lot of work on their cars since the race in Madrid. Some malicious observers suggested that the fact that they'd shared a pit with Ligier at Jarama had been extremely profitable for them. Whatever, the McLarens were considerably modified on the aerodynamic front, particulary with new side pod wing profiles combined with new rear wings. These improvements allowed the drivers to do much better in practice than of late. But the McLarens are still a little unreliable during the race.
Prost had a tremendous start and was going well until the car suddenly felt completely undriveable. Throughout the race the mechanics sought the cause of the problem, checking both the steering and the chassis itself. A thorough examination back at the factory will allow the mechanics to find out what was the real cause.
Watson drove a steady race which normally would have allowed him to finish in the points, taking into account the normal retirement rate. But this time, there were no retirements.
The new McLaren M30 is expected to appear at the German Grand Prix in mid-August.

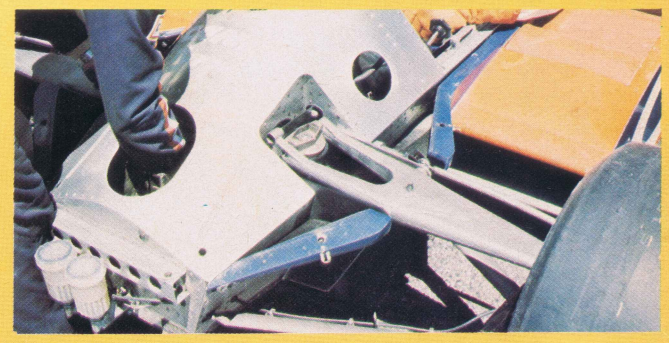
FERRARI SPA

Ferrari 312 T5/046 :
Jody Scheckter (ZA)
Ferrari 312 T5/045 :
Gilles Villeneuve (CDN)
Ferrari 312 T5/044 :
Spare.

The Ferrari team had the strange distinction of being the only team to revert to inboard rear brakes. They moved the brakes back to beside the gearbox in order to improve brake balance, but it also hindered the cars' ground effect, such as it is.

Throughout the week-end, the drivers complained of lack of grip. But it's not impossible that their real gripe was against the Michelin tyres which were mainly overshadowed by much improved Goodyear tyres. On Saturday, Jody used his spare car because there was an oil leak on his normal race car. Villeneuve had a superb start to the race and shot up to eighth place but unfortunately he had to stop on the 26th lap in order to change tyres. Scheckter had to do the same, twice.

The T5 is the only car with inboard rear brakes.



New front suspension.

CANDY TYRRELL

Tyrrell-Ford 010/4 :
Jean-Pierre Jarier (F)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/2 :
Derek Daly (IRL)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/1 :
Spare.

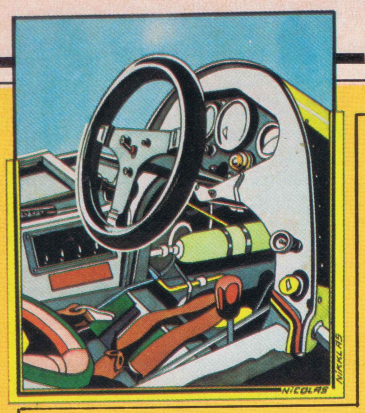
Both front and rear suspension had been modified on the Tyrrells. Furthermore, the two cars had different types of side pod. Jarier's car had extractors similar to those on the Ligiers, while Daly's had none. On Friday, Jarier had electrical problems so he jumped into the spare car which turned out to be better than his own car. It had suffered from porpoising, and curiously enough, so did Daly's. Furthermore, the Irishman's skirts were not working properly either and on Friday the right hand skirt broke.
During the race, Daly was running towards the back of the field from the start as did Jarier who also stopped at his pit.

WARSTEINER ARROWS

Arrows-Ford A3/03 :
Jochen Mass (D)
Arrows-Ford A3/05 :
Riccardo Patrese (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/01 :
Spare.

The Arrows were unmodified and appeared in similar configuration as to that at Jarama. The team had done a lot of testing at Ricard in order to find the best aerodynamic set-up : with and without front nose fins but also with long and short gearbox enclosures. The Arrows even lapped for a time without gearbox enclosures at all.
On Friday Mass broke his engine. He chose to race with front nose fins and the small gearbox surround. On the other hand, Patrese opted for the longer surround, but rejected the nose fins. But he wasn't too enthusiastic after practice because the car wasn't that competitive and he'd suffered a number of problems including electrics on Friday and a broken driveshaft on Saturday. But both cars finished which again speaks volumes for their reliability and preparation. Note that Dave Wass had stayed at home in order to work in the wind tunnel at Imperial College, Kensington.

In the cockpits

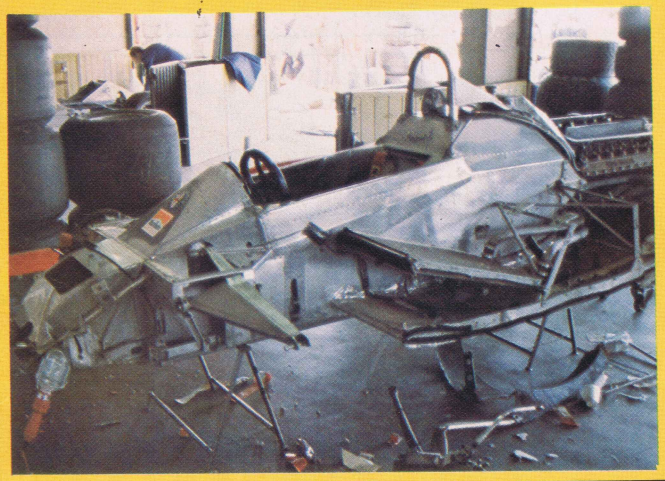


ALFA ROMEO AUTODELTA

Alfa Romeo 179/3 :
Patrick Depailler (F)
Alfa Romeo 179/2 :
Bruno Giacomelli (I)
Alfa Romeo 179/5 :
Spare.

The Alfas were little changed since their testing during unofficial practice a few days beforehand. On Friday, Giacomelli's gearbox seized while Depailler had engine problems with his spare car and then went off the track at Signes in his race car, damaging the front left suspension. The car was repaired by the next day but Patrick set his quickest time in the spare which was fitted with the lower mounted engine. Furthermore, second gear was playing up. During the warm-up he set the second quickest time on full tanks but during the race, both Alfas suffered from their mechanical unreliability again. Giacomelli's chassis broke while the right rear suspension broke on Depailler's car.

Depailler damaged his car when he crashed in practice.



THEODORE RACING

Theodore-Ford DN 12/1 :
Geoff Lees (GB)
Theodore-Ford DN 12/2 :
David Kennedy (IRL)

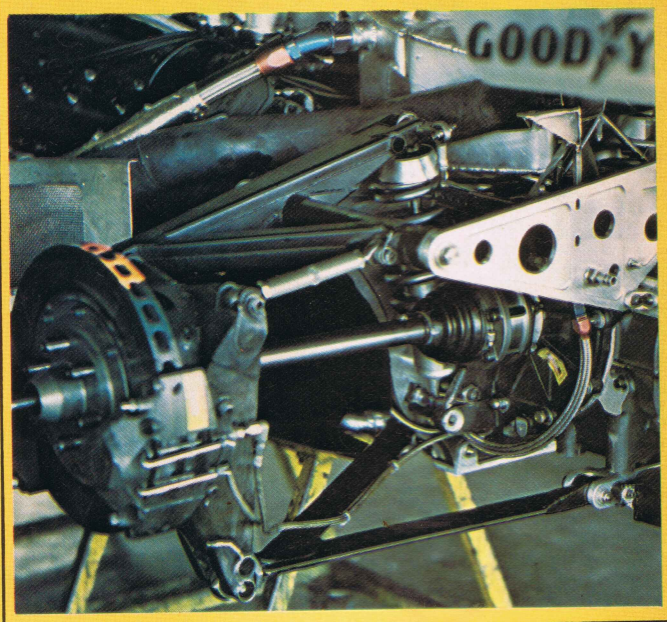
The Theodores are still not competitive and cause their drivers to make many stops in the pits during practice. At Ricard, Kennedy was delayed with a petrol leak and Lees had problems with his car's skirts. Without a resident designer, the team are currently trying to do the impossible : sort out new cars and qualify them.

ATS WHEELS

ATS-Ford D4/05 :
Marc Surer (CH)
ATS-Ford D4/04 :
Spare.

There wasn't a lot new on the two ATS cars. Both were fitted with the new side pods already seen on D4/05. But there were still a number of little differences between the cars : side pods, suspension mounting points, and rear suspension. Surer stopped on the circuit on Friday due to electrical problems so he drove the spare which suffered understeer. However, that was sorted out by the end of the session by adjusting the aerodynamics.
Surer drove really well at the start of the race, but was let down by his gearbox which caused retirement.

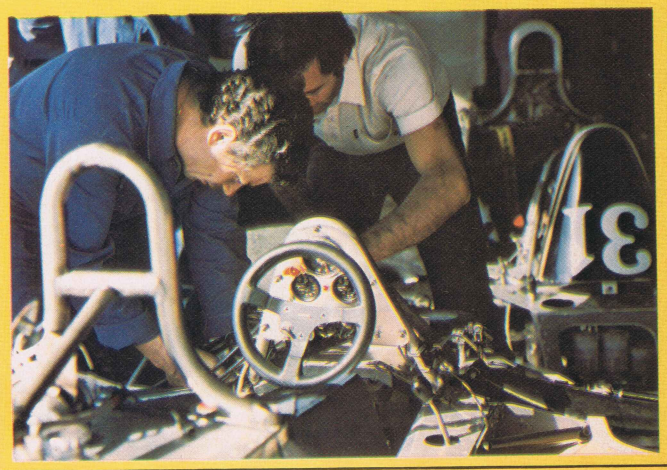
New rear suspension mounting points.



DENIM OSELLA

Osella-Ford FA 1/01 :
Eddie Cheever (USA)
Osella-Ford FA 1/02 :
Spare.

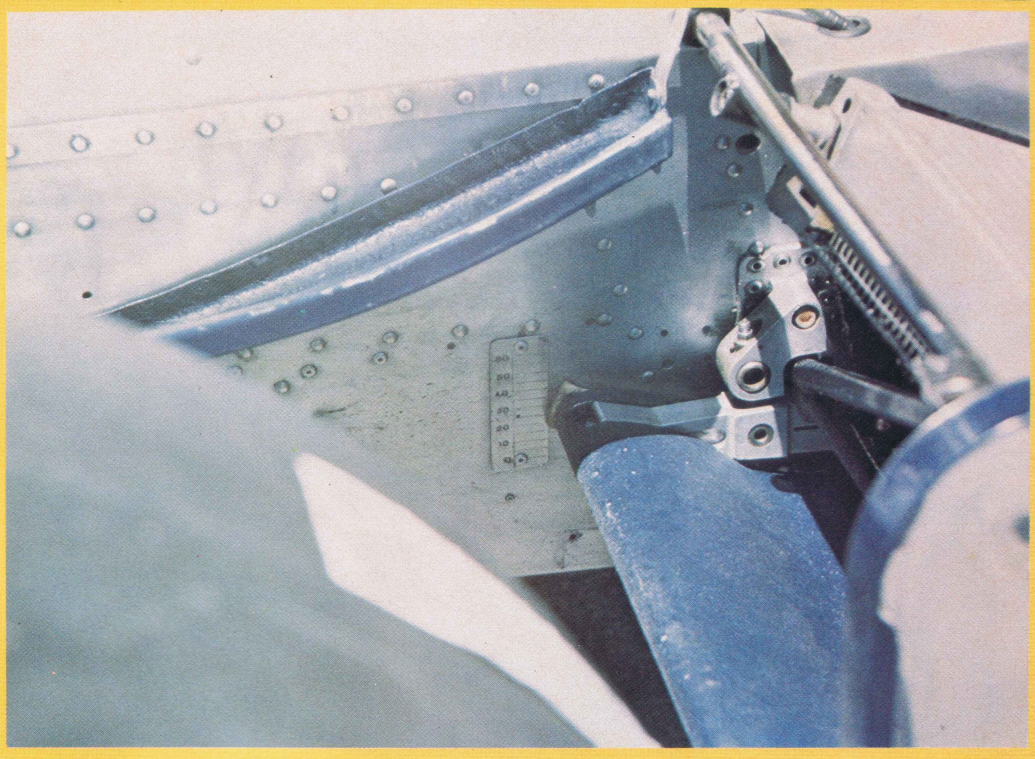
The wind tunnel work carried out in Italy had turned out to be useful in that the Osella team had discovered what was causing problems with the car at high speed. It seems that the car rolls too much which causes poor aerodynamic balance. Furthermore, the team have finally solved their porpoising problems.
Cheever broke three engines during the weekend. The reason for this, it turned out, was that air was leaking into the fuel pump in fast corners like the Signes curve.
The Osella team have finished their latest chassis. It is narrower in order to improve ground effect. Cheever will use it as his race car at the British Grand Prix. The current spare will become a test car run by a seperate team of mechanics. Testing will be carried out by either Cheever or Piercarlo Ghinzani.



ESSEX LOTUS

Lotus-Ford 81/01 :
Mario Andretti (USA)
Lotus-Ford 81/03 :
Elio De Angelis (I)
Lotus-Ford 81/02 :
Spare.

Lotus's current aim is to stiffen the monocoque which has given trouble in the past. But results show that it isn't enough to resolve the team's problems because the cars are still not competitive. In fact things seem to go well for a few laps, but then it's back to square one. De Angelis went off the track during Friday's practice session and then did the same thing the next day by trying too hard, too early on tyres that hadn't had time to heat up. Andretti also had his problems with the loss of an oil radiator and damaged skirts.
The cars understeered a lot in the slower parts of the track and weren't very quick in a straight line which leads one to believe that the side pods are giving too much downforce.

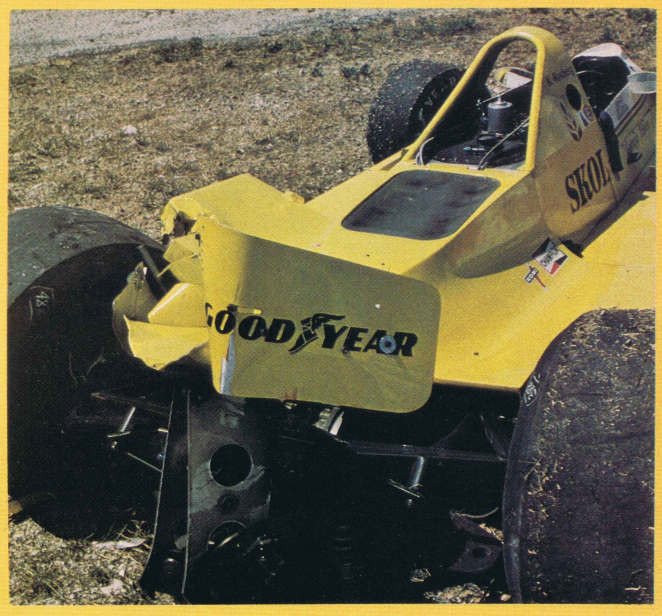


Adjustment for the side pod angles.

UNIPART ENSIGN

Ensign-Ford MN 180/14 :
Jan Lammers (NL)
Ensign-Ford MN 180/12 :
Spare.

Lammers wasn't too hopeful for his first Grand Prix in the Ensign team. He'd tested the car at Brands Hatch and found that he was at least two seconds slower than he had been in the ATS. Consequently, Lammers's main problem was one of qualification. On Saturday, he crashed but jumped into the spare with the longer wheelbase and soon had problems with the front suspension. He didn't qualify.



SKOL FITTIPALDI

Fittipaldi-Ford F7/01 :
Emerson Fittipaldi (BR)
Fittipaldi-Ford F7/02 :
Keke Rosberg (SF)
Fittipaldi-Ford F7/03 :
Spare.

The long awaited new car for the Fittipaldi team was still unready due to a delay with the bodywork. The Brazilian was obviously disillusioned as he explained that the new car should have been finished by Friday evening. That would have been too late for the French race, but he would drive it for the first time the day after the Grand Prix at Snetterton. As usual, Emerson complained of oversteer while teammate Rosberg complained of understeer.
On Friday, Fittipaldi drove the spare in order to test a number of different springs and different suspension set-ups which soon turned out to be better than on his race car.
Neither Fittipaldis were competitive during the race. Rosberg had the dubious distinction of being the only driver to crash in the race.

GOODYEAR
GITA

GITANES